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**INDEPENDENT**

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Cover photo: Fleeing army massacres, Guatemalan peasants emigrate to Mexico in Martin Lucas and Nancy Peckenham's "Camino Triste: The Hard Road of Guatemalan Refugees." Photo: Maggie O'Bryan.

**Welcome to 1984!****Big Brother Is Watching . . .**

*The Independent* welcomes letters to the editors. Send them to FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York NY 10012. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



## MEDIA CLIPS

# Dollar Drought Compels Muni Station to Sell Time

DEBRA GOLDMAN

WNYC-TV, New York's municipally licensed UHF public television station, was known for years to New Yorkers as the channel on which you could catch a program missed during its first run on WNET. Its second-class PTV status, its blowup-prone studio cameras, and its spit-and-chickenwire transmitter conspired to keep it poor, while its poverty reinforced the inadequate *status quo*. In November, the city revealed plans to change all that. The station announced that it is abandoning non-commercial status and will begin leasing its airtime to commercial programmers. At the same time, the station wants to preserve its identity as a public service broadcaster, and it intends to retain four hours of prime time daily for its own, strictly non-commercial, use. Maintaining two separate editorial environments on the same station will be a neat trick, if WNYC can pull it off. It all depends on how you define "the public interest."

Peter Low, WNYC manager of programming, and Rick Siggelkow, manager of TV production, believe it can be done. The city emphasized that the move was designed to make this poor sister among the city's broadcast outlets (reported to be the only municipally owned TV and radio station in the country) financially self-sufficient for the first time in its history. Low and Siggelkow look forward to

the time when earnings from leasing will subsidize the production and acquisition of original programming. For the last three years, WNYC has been struggling to create a viewing schedule of its own on a meager budget. New York independents, experts at working on slim resources, have numbered among their partners. Now Low and Siggelkow see the opportunity to continued these efforts—along with their collaborations with indies—but with far greater resources.

The changes at WNYC began in 1980, when John Beck, who had a background in Boston public radio, became director. At the time, the station was still subsisting on PBS leftovers. Like every WNYC director since the budget crisis of 1975, Beck was under pressure to get the station off the city tax rolls. Reasoning that WNYC could never attract viewer dollars without original programming, Beck offered a narrowcasting concept in the public interest: the Black Cultural Service. To implement the service, he brought in as program director Robert Gore, another veteran of WGBH in both radio and television. Working with an acquisition budget that allowed the station to pay producers a laughable \$7 to \$10 a minute, Gore put together a first-ever, prime time array of programming for, by, and about black people.

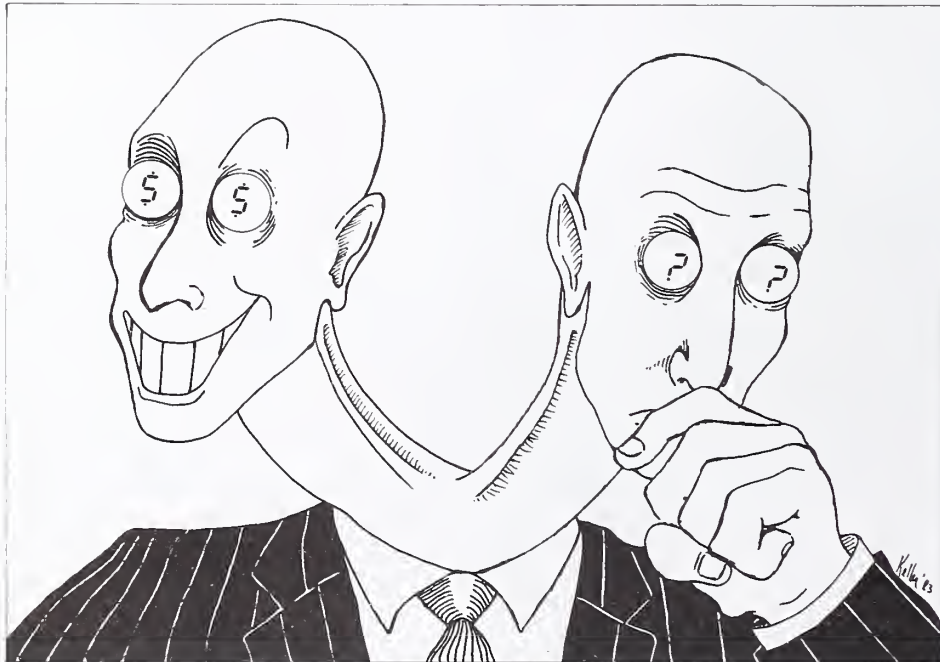
The Black Cultural Service aroused con-

siderable controversy. While many praised its mixed bag of gospel shows, independent films, old movies featuring black players and PBS standbys like *Tony Brown's Journal*, others found the programming amateurish. "I thought it was damned condescending," declares one regular WNYC viewer. "They didn't seem to realize that a black person is not going to jump for joy just because you put another black face in front of him." Clearly the achievements of the service were limited by the pitiful budget with which Gore worked. Yet the most crucial failing of black programming in the eyes of the private foundation board which runs the station was that the on-air fundraisers for the service did not yield what it considered to be a sufficient amount.

In June, the board gave the Black Cultural Service a resounding vote of no confidence when Bob Gore was relieved of his post. His supporters, many of whom believe that the board's enthusiasm for black programming never ran very deep, claim that his dismissal had racial overtones. As a black dealing with an all-white board, one media activist points out, "Gore was fighting for black programming pretty much alone." One indication of WNYC's attitude, his friends declare, is that when one of his supporters, Reverend Calvin Butts of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, threw a farewell party for him last spring, no one from WNYC was in attendance. Gore's replacement, Denise Oliver, ex-head of the Black Filmmaker Foundation, which has worked closely with WNYC on the service, voiced her intention to continue black programming but with greater emphasis on "entertainment." Suddenly last November, on the eve of the leased-time announcement, Oliver's role at the station was terminated.

WNYC, which at presstime had not named a permanent successor, flatly denies these actions had racial elements, claiming that "reorganization" was the motive. "Look," says one sympathetic staffer, "WNYC is a very hard place to work. On the one hand, you have to dress very straight, and be at work at nine, and go to meetings and say things like, 'Yes, I'll get on that right away.' On the other hand, we're about two steps away from a Pacifica station. Their [Oliver and Gore's] problems were just administrative ones." Neither Gore nor Oliver could be reached for comment.

The Black Cultural Service did succeed in shaking up the repeat-ridden WNYC schedule. In the new atmosphere it created, other independents have begun to appear on the channel. At an AIVF-WNYC forum last fall, producers Wendy Chambers, whose video art series *Videoville* ran for thirteen weeks, and Doris Chase of *Doris Chase Concepts*, spoke of the satisfaction of being aired on prime time. Yet as executive producer Rick Siggelkow points out, WNYC could only afford to do these shows because *Videoville* was already funded and *Doris Chase Concepts* was well along in the production process before the station became involved. Another independently produced series with which Siggelkow



The two faces of WNYC-TV.



was involved, *Our Time*, a magazine show for the gay community, was produced for Channel L, the city's cable arm, with money from Manhattan's two cable systems. In each case, the series subtracted little from the WNYC budget.

The budget constraints which sabotaged the Black Cultural Service and limited the participation of indies led Beck to reintroduce the notion of leased time, an idea which had been kicking around the station since 1977. WNYC already had a leasee in Fuji Telecommunications Corporation, which currently offers two hours of Japanese-language programming each morning. With an eye on the PBS experiments with commercials, Beck drew up a proposal for commercial leasing which a year later resulted in the city's announcement.

Beck, however, will not be around to reap the benefits of the new arrangement. He left WNYC at the end of the year, to be replaced by his own predecessor, Mary Perot Nichols. A variety of reasons are offered for his exit, ranging from "burn-out" to the animosity of certain board members. In his effort to vitalize the station, Beck "encouraged" the retirement of many long-time WNYC veterans, an action many thought was long overdue, but which inevitably caused bad feeling. Nevertheless, Nichols is rejoining a station far different from the one she left.

WNYC has not severed its ties with PBS, and hopes to have access to its programming in the future. For its part, PBS is taking a "wait and see" attitude. In WNYC's request for proposals, the station declared that service to the community would be a factor in its choice of leasees. As an illustration of this policy, station press spokesman Lloyd Trufelman explains, "If a children's programmer offered us \$2 million to air ad-supported children's shows, and a programmer who wants to show the best of *I Love Lucy* with commercials aimed at housewives offers us \$8 million, we'd probably choose the children's programmer." Yet the contradiction between serving the public interest and commercial programming, which by definition addresses its audience as consumers rather than citizens, still stands. Admittedly, this does not seem to bother WNET, which is reportedly one of the PBS stations gearing up for a lobbying fight to preserve its right to air commercials.

Prior to testing the market, WNYC hoped to be able to take in \$4 to \$5 million a year on three-year contracts. Until the station knows whether the RFP is successful, plans for non-commercial prime time remain vague. In the meantime, Peter Low invites interested independents to call him at the station. Programs most likely to catch the eye of the staff are ones which relate directly to the concerns and community life of New Yorkers. If past experience is any guide, the station is likely to favor projects somewhat further along than an idea on paper.

And what will happen to the Black Cultural Service? WNYC insists that while the black audience will remain important, black program-

ming will be "de-ghettoized." "If you show a DCTV tape on Chinatown, and then follow it with a black film, is that Chinese programming and black programming?" asks Trufelman. "No, it's New York City programming. That's what we want to do."

### **"On-Line" & "Stand-by" Aid Hi-Tech Video Access**

Because a great deal of special effects technology is extremely expensive, video artists have traditionally relied on ingenuity to bridge their visions and their budgets. Two alternative media organizations in New York, Media Alliance and 185 Nassau Corporation, are attempting to open up artists' options through pilot programs which will give independents access to state-of-the-art equipment at not-for-profit prices.

On-Line, the Media Alliance project, arranges post-production time for artists at Reeves Teletape, one of the largest commercial video houses in the city. The origins of On-Line are a casual conversation between Reeves facility manager Bob McDowell and MA director Robin White. McDowell, who has independently produced some tapes of his own, mentioned how much he liked Mary Lucier's *Ohio at Giverny* and was yet more intrigued by the credit given to Nexus, a Manhattan post-production facility. When he learned that Lucier had worked out a deal with Nexus, paying much less than commercial rates for use of their equipment, he expressed interest in starting a similar program at Reeves. Media Alliance agreed to serve as a screening committee for proposals, referring qualified artists with non-commercial projects to Reeves for scheduling.

The unique aspect of On-Line, according to White, is its educational thrust. Before the artist is billed for any time, he or she sits down with the Reeves staff to discuss desired effects and where they fit into the tape. "The engineer and editor then offers the simplest way to achieve the effect," White explained. "Many of the artists don't know what's involved technically in getting what they want. Some effects could take too long and be too expensive. But they will come away with knowledge that will be of great use when they go into pre-production on their next project." She adds, "They are even given free time to rehearse the effects while they're learning, and it's all free."

In December, On-Line expanded its educational focus by initiating monthly seminars, led by the Reeves staff, covering the ins and outs of the state-of-the-art editing room. White wants to involve other facilities in the program, including an animation-computer graphics house. "When commercial professionals see the tapes the artist makes on a small budget, they are astonished," she says. "The program gives them a chance to work on the cutting edge of video. It introduces them to other kinds of thinking."

Proposal selection, which, beginning this month, will be done by a committee made up of

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Media Alliance members, uses no aesthetic criteria. "We need three things," says White. "A written description of the project; a specific assessment of what state it is in (different formats? time code? photos, prints, film?); and the project funders and budget. We then verify that it is a strictly not-for-profit project and decide if it's possible, in terms of time and money, to do all that the artist wants to do." Once Media Alliance introduces the artist to Reeves, its official role is at an end. The artist makes the deal with Reeves and pays the facility directly.

Time is booked on an hourly basis, during regular business hours, and billed at an average 80% discount off the rate charged to commercial clients. Be warned, however, that while these reductions are impressive, even a fraction of commercial rates can add up to a significant amount of money. One noteworthy side benefit is that Reeves has arranged for Fuji to donate a one-inch master to each of its non-profit clients.

Stand-By, the project of media group 185 Nassau Corporation, is arranged somewhat differently. Artists with non-commercial tapes contract directly with 185 for a certain number of nighttime hours at a CMX post-production house (which at this time prefers to remain anonymous). "We went to the facility and said, 'You're paying for electricity 24 hours a day,'" says Alex Roshuk, the organization's special projects coordinator. "Why not let artists use those nighttime hours for a special low rate?" The price that 185 negotiated is \$45 an hour, which buys use of CMX, a Grass Valley 300 Switcher, three ¾" decks and a single 1" deck. Quantel, ADO, and Vidifont are also available; the soup-to-nuts packages run \$105 an hour.

As the name of the program suggests, the availability of the editing room to artists is contingent on whether the time is needed by a commercial client paying the full rate. But, Roshuk reports, so far only one artist of the 15 that have taken advantage of the program has been bumped.

Roshuk hopes Stand-By will become a permanent resource for video independents. "Videomakers should really take advantage of Stand-By. It is the only way to convince the facility and the commercial video community that such a thing is really needed."

## Record Grant Resuscitates Indie Cable Channel

In what is thought to be the largest single grant ever given by a private foundation to a media project, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation announced last fall its award of \$666,800 to ACSN-The Learning Channel, a not-for-profit satellite service in Washington DC. The project, dubbed the National Library of Media Arts, is in fact more dynamic than its staid title suggests. Combined with \$100,000 from the NEA and \$250,000

from The Learning Channel itself, the money will go toward the acquisition and promotion of 24 hours of cable programming, consisting of film and video art, media about the arts, and social documentaries, all produced by independents.

It has been several years since independents began dreaming of a transponder of their own. In 1980, NEA's Media Arts Program introduced the issue with a pamphlet called *Access II: An Independent Producer's Handbook of Satellite Communications*. (The original *Access*,

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written by Nancy Legge, appeared in 1977.) A year later, independents from San Francisco, Colorado and New York created a project they called "Window," an attempt to secure indies a place on the cable dial. At the time, however, they found they could not even raise the money to do market research, let alone lease a spot on a satellite.

Yet even as independents were working in vain on their own collective effort, Brian O'Doherty, NEA's Media Arts director and the force behind *Access II*, was considering ways in which the NEA, on behalf of independents, might lead the way toward use of the new technologies. After winning support within the NEA, he approached ACSN-The Learning Channel in Washington DC. As its hyphenated name suggests, ACSN-The Learning Channel leads something of a double life. As Appalachian Community Service Network, it is a satellite veteran from the early seventies (years before there were any commercial birds circling the planet). Funded by the Department of Education, ACSN created educational programming which it bounced to Appalachian school systems off a transponder supplied by NASA. When cable systems began gearing up to receive signals from commercial satellites after 1975, ACSN initiated an attempt to become cable's answer to PBS. In 1980, it set itself up as a private, not-for-profit educational programming service, which now markets itself to the cable industry as The Learning Channel, or TLC.

O'Doherty chose TLC after looking into several cable services. It was attractive, he claims, because it was not-for-profit, it offered a national footprint from its transponder on Satcom III-R, and it was eager to take on the

project. Yet in other ways, it was an odd choice. O'Doherty was aware that no one at TLC was at all familiar with independent work. He even arranged screenings for the TLC staff at the NEA to introduce them to what independent media was all about. They were ignorant despite many attempts by Appalachian independents to convince the channel to show their work. To the eye of regional mediamakers, a lot of money was poured into the service with little visible result. Nevertheless the Media Arts Program gave TLC an award grant of \$100,000 in 1980.

In an effort to raise the credibility of the project, O'Doherty wanted to bring in "someone with the full confidence of the independent community." In 1982, after delays in the project caused in part by personnel changes at TLC, he introduced the organization to Gerry O'Grady, director of Media Study/Bufalo. O'Grady enthusiastically agreed to select materials for the series and serve as executive producer, although all felt that \$100,000 was not much to work with. Rather than produce the four hours of programming these funds would buy, they widened their money search. It was Virgil Grillo, then O'Doherty's assistant at NEA, who informed TLC that Chicago's well-heeled MacArthur Foundation wanted to get into media funding and arranged an introduction. The six-figure grant that resulted represents MacArthur's dramatic first plunge into the field.

O'Grady wants to divide the programming into two 12-hour series. The first is *Dis/patches*, which O'Grady describes as a compilation of individual works "patched" together in a 60-minute format. In each program of *Dis/patches*, slated to debut in the fall of 1984, a half-hour documentary on one of the arts will be surrounded by fifteen minutes of film and video art on either end. *Agenda*, slated for January 1985, will present a series of 12 social issue documentaries from all regions of the country. O'Grady himself will write and select resources for the "interstitial" material, "highly visual" segments which will contextualize the works presented. This will be produced by Chiz Schultz, a PTV veteran and an independent filmmaker with his own NEA and NEH track record.

TLC's distribution plans call for three levels of exposure. The first will be on TLC cable affiliates, which, by next fall, should deliver seven million subscribers. Next it will be offered as a "stand-alone" (i.e. not part of a regular programming service) to non-affiliated systems in the top 100 markets. Finally, public television stations in non-cabled markets only will have their turn. Media Study/Bufalo, which will contract on TLC's behalf, will pay mediamakers \$210 a minute under a four-showing, three-year non-exclusive agreement.

In addition, producers are hoping to become involved in secondary distribution of the series. There is talk of cassette or disk sales, available by phone through a number to be flashed at the end of each program, as well as



non-theatrical rentals. "The producers I've spoken to about this are very enthusiastic," O'Grady relates, "as long as we're prepared to pursue secondary distribution aggressively." These rights will be negotiable separately.

Indeed, it's heavy duty sophisticated promotion that distinguishes the National Library of Media Arts from other indie ventures on the tube. TLC is launching a direct mail campaign aimed at 25,000 cable systems and institutions in an attempt to generate interest in the series, to be followed by phone calls and a second mailing. The service will also distribute a printed program for each show, written by O'Grady, with artist interviews, filmographies and background. The key is that TLC is not only promoting independents, but itself as well. Rob Shuman, TLC's executive vice president, has expressed hope that independent programming (and MacArthur funding) will become a long-term feature of the channel.

Satellite access for independent artists is "in its very early stages and it's very fragile," says O'Doherty. While the future of the enterprise as a whole remains uncertain, the one organization sure to immediately benefit is Media Study/Bufalo. O'Grady and the staff, including John Minkowski, Bruce Jenkins and Lynn Corcoran, who will be selecting the material, are now arbiters of a project of national significance for the entire independent community. O'Grady wants the programming to be drawn from the broadest constituency possible, both in terms of aesthetics and geography. Indies will have to rely on his judgment, since, thanks to the structure of the project, he is in no way directly accountable to the community.

Yet even in the midst of our enthusiasm for the kind of opportunities this project offers, it is sobering to think that it took a small group of well-connected men to accomplish what a collective of independents could not do on their own. As O'Grady says, "This is really Brian [O'Doherty]'s concept." However, the power the NEA wields, for good and ill, over the independent media community is hardly news. Certainly the timing of the project is important; today, "Window" advocates willingly admit an indie cable channel was probably premature in 1981. Indies may yet have their transponder in the sky.

Although no application deadline was set at press time, proposals will probably be accepted until the end of March. For more up-to-date information, contact Gerry O'Grady at Media Study/Bufalo, 207 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14202, (716) 847-2555.

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down right and left," Sweeney said of their search for funding for the project.

On October 14, 1983, filmmakers Carmen Ashurst and John Douglas completed the documentary *Grenada: The Future Coming Towards Us*. That day Grenada's Prime Minister Maurice Bishop was arrested by members of his own New Jewel Movement and by the month's end, Bishop was dead, the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) had fallen and the US Marines were on Grand Anse Beach.

What followed was, as Sweeney put it, "a success story with tears" for *Grenada: Portrait of a Revolution*. The Grenada footage became a hot commodity with networks willing to pay decent prices—although the sales came regrettably as a result of the turmoil on the island.

After Bishop was killed, footage from the film and the tape were sold to PBS' *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour* at standard rates. Kelly and Sweeney were contacted by a friend at the San Francisco CBS affiliate who arranged a sale to CBS national. Unsure of what to charge, Kelly asked for a \$600 flat fee plus \$100 per minute. After the invasion CBS wanted more footage, and Kelly and Sweeney's contact volunteered to negotiate the price for them—bringing it up to a \$2,000 guaranteed flat fee plus \$1,000 per minute, for a total of two minutes and 15 seconds. CBS also gave Video Free America, Kelly and Sweeney's non-profit media center, an over-the-air credit on the Nightly News and a following special. Meanwhile, the pair sold footage to WPIX in New York and to a local ABC affiliate which reedited a 10-minute piece.

Ashurst and Douglas were initially contacted about their film footage by Rick O'Regan from ABC's *20/20*, who they met while searching *20/20*'s library for stock footage on Grenada. Ashurst was able to negotiate a standard \$1,000 per minute rate from the network. Footage from the film was also sold to Gil Noble of WABC's *Like It Is* program, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and Japan's NHK as well as the *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour*. Ashurst sold additional footage to *MacNeil/Lehrer* for filmmaker Larry Bullard, who shot Maurice Bishop's speech at Hunter College last year.

It is no surprise that independent producers would have been first on the scene in what ultimately became a political "hot spot." Jon Alpert, Keiko Tsuno, Tom Sigel, Pam Yates, Glenn Silber and others have been among the scores of independents who have brought news of developments in Vietnam, El Salvador, and other places around the world to the public's attention far before and with far more depth than the networks. Kelly calls the networks "parachute journalists who drop in, shoot

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something and fly back out," while independents tend to look for analysis and depth. Kelly has followed the events in the Caribbean steadily since 1978, and she and Sweeney shot hours of video to produce the 30-minute tape. Ashurst spent two years in Grenada after the 1979 revolution, supervising the development of the island's own media system.

The producers, being intimately versed in the country's history, were naturally frustrated by the way the networks treated the story. Ashurst expressed disappointment that while the producers at MacNeil/Lehrer and ABC were sympathetic and wanted to get at the real story in Grenada, the final treatments were shallow and generally followed the US government line.

"When the story first broke, Bishop was under house arrest, and MacNeil/Lehrer treated that almost as a joke," Kelly recalls. "They billed it as a power struggle in a little country, and used it as an end piece." Kelly unsuccessfully tried to get the program to look deeper into the issues and at the stronger material, but was ignored. But when the invasion occurred, MacNeil/Lehrer called back, "Uh, remember that footage you told us about? ... Can we take another look at it?" Ironically, Kelley and Sweeney's proposal to CPB for funding for the project came up before a panel at that same time. But according to Sweeney, "The invasion occurred while the panel was meeting, so they decided that the material was not relevant anymore and turned it down."

The producers are, of course, more interested in getting their work on the air in its entirety. *Grenada: The Future Coming Towards Us* is being considered by Gail Christian, news director at PBS, for national broadcast. Various European television stations were interested in broadcast rights and according to Douglas, "they have been the most supportive all the way along." CNN will show clips including the original narration in 5-10 minute in-depth news analysis spots.

The San Francisco PBS affiliate KQED was the first to show Video Free America's tape—in May of 1983—and had previously provided post-production facilities. The invasion happened to occur around the time of PBS' Program Fair, and KQED lent a hand in hustling the tape to program directors, managing to arrange a national feed through the Interregional Program Service. *Portrait of a Revolution* is also being considered for purchase by European television.

As Grenada slowly disappears from the nightly news, the producers will continue to distribute their pieces and, undoubtedly, will continue to remain on top of or involved in the events in Grenada. Kelly recalls a post-invasion conversation with a reporter from WPIX: "The reporter told me, 'I've just gotten back from Grenada—I've been there for 10 days.'" Kelly says she asked him if he had interviewed Radix and Louison. "And he asked me, 'Who are they?' I couldn't believe he

hadn't talked to them." Radix and Louison are the only two surviving members of the Bishop government and are likely to figure prominently in future developments there. And so it goes.

—Renee Tajima

## Skeptical Programmers Endanger "Sacred Cows"

Michael Mears' *No Sacred Cows* series, which was to begin bringing complete freedom



Prostitutes' organizer Margo St. James in *Hard Work*, originally slated for airing on *No Sacred Cows*.

of expression to the PTV airwaves in February, 1984, has been pulled from the PBS spring schedule pending further review. CPB and PBS had initially backed Mears' plan to broadcast films that would not otherwise make it to the small screen because of biased viewpoints, unpopular subject matter or "obscene" content (i.e. nudity and dirty language). But a less than enthusiastic response from local PBS programmers at their November Program Fair resulted in *Cows* being sent back to the drawing board.

According to Mears, a "lack of awareness" on the part of the programmers was the main reason for their objections to the show. Although they had heard about the series, they had not yet seen any of the programs and were shocked to find that PBS had already assigned it to a primetime slot. Barry Chase of the PBS Public Affairs division agreed that the programmers' criticisms were generally not directed at the concept of the show (an op ed page for PBS) but rather at specifics of how it was being developed. For instance: is nudity still a sacred cow that demands knocking? And, even if it is, do shows primarily notable for the fact that they contain it belong in the same series as shows that present minority points of view on social issues? Also: can PTV really claim that *Cows* will widen the range of discourse in the mass media when no funds have been allocated for the production of new works? Will only those points of view with money behind them get on the air?

These are criticisms that Mears can address without completely violating his original in-

tent: first, by narrowing the focus of the series, and second, by making sure that at least as many truly independent films are scheduled as works commissioned by groups like the National Rifle Association.

The inclusion of indie productions was part of both Mears' and CPB's original vision. The proposal for the series was a bone tossed to starving indies at last April's controversial "Independent Documentary" conference in Washington DC (co-sponsored by CPB and the American Film Institute). In one of the conference's most heated discussions, PBS staff people accused independent documentarians of not meeting "journalistic standards" and indies responded saying that it was the PBS definition of journalistic standards that was flawed, not the films. The proposal for *Cows* called the question by stating that only works that strongly advocated a particular position, even to the point of blatant propaganda, would be considered. But the program mix indicates that op ed is not being defined as time for the airing of controversial opinions but time for airing controversial programs whether they include a minority viewpoint or just some obscenities—in short, programs whose contents the stations are not going to want to vouch for, whatever their subject matter.

Although *Cows* was not intended to be an indie vehicle per se, a New York indie who approached PBS about airing her documentary on a touchy political subject was advised to submit it to Mears. She said she heard from a number of other indie documentarians that they'd been told the same thing: "PBS seemed to be saying, 'Here's your slot,' even though the focus of the series was not on independent filmmaking, but films with shock value."

Some indies are no more wild about the mix of programs that Mears has proposed (perhaps a show featuring Monty Python's John Cleese in the raw to be followed by an indie doc on Central America?) than are the PBS programmers. Others are willing to take national exposure where they can get it. As Ginny Durrin, whose *Hard Work* (a documentary on prostitution) caught Mears' eye, put it, "There is such a homogenization of point of view that we should do anything we can to increase the variety of expression. While I might feel a tad ghettoized, the most important thing right now is getting on the air."

At press time, meetings between Mears, CPB and PBS staff people and representatives of the Program Advisory Committee had been scheduled to formulate a mutually acceptable format for *Cows*. Mears said he is willing to make changes as long as the basic free speech concept remains intact.

Indies whose work was being considered for inclusion in the *Cows* series are keeping their fingers crossed, because if *Cows* is scrapped, they doubt they'll get on the air at all. It's a sad comment on the indie/PBS airtime situation that producers feel regret over the loss of such a dubious program slot.

—Andrea Estepa





The Japanese went wild for South Bronx rappers in Charlie Ahearn's *Wild Style*.

## Japanese Groove to "Wild Style" Funk

When director Charlie Ahearn's *Wild Style* was opened in Japan by Daiei International during early October, it hadn't even seen release in its home turf of New York City. After a two-week blitz of performances, special promotions, publicity and public appearances by members of its cast and Ahearn—all backed by its distributor—Japan, or at least Tokyo, had been transformed into a seeming extension of the South Bronx. Although the environment of *Wild Style*—the rap-breaker-funk-graffiti world of the black and Puerto Rican denizens of the inner city ghettos—might seem about as remote to Tokyo's gleaming modernity as a Noh troupe would be on 125th Street, the Japanese's hunger for pop culture led them to eat up all the merchandise—t-shirts, an audio cassette book, picture magazines, posters—as well as pack the halls and clubs where the Wildstylers performed.

All this special effort to promote a film which might in other places seem marginal was a result of the combined efforts of Ahearn and Daiei associate Kaz Kazui. Says Kazui, who was hired to orchestrate the Japanese promotion of *Wild Style*: "The Daiei people had just been distributing German-language films in Japan but I asked them about American films. *Wild Style* seemed perfect for Japan because Japanese young people hunger for emotional outlets for their expression and this movie is packed with them." Because this was a big step for Daiei, a company recently resurrected from bankruptcy but now backed by the Tokuma publishing company, Kazui conveniently enlisted the aid of the Seibu department

store (the largest in Japan) which had been planning a New York fair close to the time of the *Wild Style* release. Together with the Hakuhodo advertising agency, the three joined forces to promote the film and the performing crew of 20 people.

"The reaction was great, even more than we expected," says Kazui. "We opened in October in the Shinjuku Toei Hall which seats 300. On our first day we drew 800 people, over the weekend we averaged 1,000 a day. Normally the place attracts about 200, 250 a day." Certainly much of this success is due to the two weeks performers from the film such as Busy Bee, Double Trouble, Fab Five Freddie, The Rock Steady Crew, Afrika Islam, the Cold Crush Brothers and DJ Charlie Chase spent not only performing during Seibu's weeklong New York Fair but also at the Fuji-Sankei Sports Fair, Tsubaki Disco House, Pittecan Thropus Club, The Bee and Neo-Japonesque. Such performances stimulated not only audience numbers but also the sale of merchandizing materials (apparently a necessity for any release in Japan, where people really go for such things).

With a film like *Wild Style*, the dialogue and the story line might have hindered audience comprehension, but a group of several regular translators as well as Kazui and special translator Peter Barakan (with Ahearn and Fab Five Freddie's help) transformed the street lingo into ordinary English then Japanese. As a result, the press gave its full support as well. Articles appeared in major magazines (*Brutus*, *Popeye*, *Cosmopolitan Japan*, *Young Jump*, *Fashion News*, *Heibun Punch*) as well as major dailies and weeklies. Television appearances included The Tamori show (Japan's number

one comedian), NHK, 11pm, and several morning interview programs. Radio and regional press followed suit. DJ Chase even did a special radio appearance as well, scratch mixing Japanese music and rap.

The only negative aspect to the whole event was in the regional follow-through. According to Kazui, he informed the Daiei people to spend the same promo money (about \$40,000) on release in the nine other cities the film was released in, or else hold off release until reaction had built up in Tokyo. Instead, they released it in the ten cities simultaneously and as a result fared moderately in the other cities.

Nonetheless, the positive reaction in Japan has built up Ahearn's confidence for US release. And because of Kazui's success with this independent film, Daiei is supporting his efforts toward an independent New York filmmaker's festival in Japan next year.

*Wild Style* is distributed by First Run Features in the US and will be playing in Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles and other cities in 1984, if all goes well.

—Brad Balfour

## There's No Place Like Home For Video Art on 1/2"

One wintry day last November Steve Agetstein, director of the San Francisco Video Festival and publisher of *Send Video* magazine (a.k.a. *Video 80s*) breezed into the AIVF offices with an exuberant look on his face. He had just come from New Video, a small home video store located in SoHo, and he was happy because the retailer had just agreed to stock his newest venture: home video cassettes of artists' work.

Agetstein refers to the project as "video publishing" for artists, and figures he can sell 1,000 of anything—1,000 being the "print run" for his limited editions of each of three different works, selected from the last SF Video Fest. The video enthusiast stresses that the professional dubs and snazzy cover design of the 1/2" tapes should allow them a fair shake in the razzle-dazzle home video market. When he opened his briefcase, we saw what he meant: the three gray and black wrapped tapes looked like spiffy versions of what you might find on the shelf of a tape emporium.

The first three tapes in the new venture, called *Send Video Arts*, are *Smothering Dreams* by Dan Reeves, *Ellis Island* by Meredith Monk, and *Allan 'n' Allen's Complaint* by Nam June Paik. Why these three? Each is by a well-known artist and already has a considerable reputation and each, by the standards of video art, is a long work—from 22 minutes to 30 minutes. In addition to piggybacking on the reknown of the artist, Agetstein is plotting other strategies. One he tried out on me was: "Every Jewish attorney should buy his grandma a copy of *Ellis Island*."

The terms of the business deal have been evolving since the project was conceived a year ago as a spin-off from the SF Video Festival. Agetstein and his co-worker Wendy Garfield found an investor who could handle the costs of mastering and cover design. In return, the



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investor, Pyramid International, will profit from all mail order sales, while Send handles retail placement. The tapes will retail at \$44.95, near the high end of the price range for a Hollywood feature in Beta or VHS. Since the tapes at this volume cost \$21 to manufacture, there's a potential \$10 profit which will be split 60/40 with the artists concerning the larger share. To earn \$6 a tape won't rocket any artists to Fat City, but in terms of return per viewer, it doesn't compare badly to closed circuit showings, or, for that matter, PBS. Send Video Arts is also picking up the international home video rights for two years, so Agetstein is hoping to move into that market fast. Since home video is so much more widespread in Europe than

America, there might be a few francs, guilders and deutschmarks to clink together if he succeeds.

Agetstein noted that this venture is different from previous attempts to sell individual tapes by such entities as Electronic Arts Intermix, Leo Castelli-Sonnabend Tapes and the Whitney Museum. One, they were selling to art consumers and in a ¾" format; and two, their prices were not "mass market," nor were the tapes placed or advertised in the home video market. As for the future, a "Best of SF Video Fest" compilation is being considered. Pyraid's address is 61 Camino Alto, #108, Mill Valley CA 94941, (415) 381-2567.

—Kathleen Hulser ■

## SUPER-8

# B & T Take Stock: How to Buy S-8 in a Bear Market

BOB BRODSKY & TONI TREADWAY

What do documentarians, dramatic filmmakers, video producers and artists, installation and performance artists, anthropologists, sociologists, media teachers, sci-fi buffs, community activists, tourists and pornographers have in common? They all use Super-8. Perhaps not quite what Kodak had in mind, but still a healthy market (and could be a much better one if a few of the big-boys had their acts together; e.g. Kodak sells 50' and 200' Kodachrome S-8 out of separate divisions of the company!). Contrary to press predictions of five years ago, video has not wiped S-8 off the map; rather, the two are co-existing very well, and there is no foreseeable time when video will be able to do for the money, convenience and independence what S-8 is doing. There are, however, changes occurring in S-8.

Like all mature media (where the market is stable rather than expanding) S-8 has fewer suppliers and outlets. It has become necessary for those who use it in each place to find one another and focus their purchasing on a few retailers who decide to serve this market.

Our recent NEA-workshop tour of media centers (Seattle; Portland, OR; San Juan, PR; Milwaukee; Chicago; Pittsburgh and NY) brought out twice as many attendees as our tour of a year ago. Only in San Juan (where attendees came from as far as Mayaguez and Vieques) were S-8 users buying co-operatively and developing good lines of supplies for themselves. (They use Solar Cine Products, 4247 S. Kedzie, Chicago IL 60632.) They were also the best equipped and the least affluent group we visited.

In many cities we found discount depart-

ment and drug stores charging up to 80% more for S-8 film than exclusive camera shops in the same cities. The logic is simple: if you can't move film quickly at a discount price, raise the price. Specialty photo shops work differently: They're in it for the long haul. Right now we're paying \$7.95 for Sound Kodachrome and \$8.83 for Ektachrome 160 Sound, but we pay an additional \$4.09 per roll for Kodak processing.

Until recently Kodak was offering the best processing of S-8. The colors were clean and the film was returned scratchless. During the past year-and-a-half, Kodak has been reorganizing its S-8 processing facilities. The result has been a disaster in its processing service. We urge those of you who are the victims to write to Paul Dickinson, Consumer Markets Div., Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester NY 14650. Simply because it has more at stake in good processing, Kodak needs to hear from S-8 users.

On the other hand, Fuji, which for so many years has neglected its Single 8 market (Fuji's S-8 format), has recently installed a new processing machine in Anaheim, CA, and is reaching new standards of excellence in quality and turnaround time. Fuji equipment is very hard to find in the US. Stadium Film Lab in Pittsburgh has some; Halmar Enterprises (Box 474, Lewiston, NY 14092) has some and also has the pre-stripped Fuji silent cassettes for post-recording.

Evidence of how consumers can affect suppliers occurred recently when the Goko Industrial Company, Kawasaki, Japan, reversed its decision to discontinue its top-of-the-line stereo sound (sound-on-sound,

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sound-with-sound) recording editor (with straight-line film threading), the RM-8008. T. Goto, the president, said the reversal came in light of numerous letters from film teachers and other users. The price will increase, but even so, the options afforded by this magnificent instrument will keep S-8 capabilities at their zenith. Our source of Goko RM-8008's, Jim Carpenter (Box 1321, Meadville, PA 16335) is one of the world's strongest supporters of S-8 users.

At this time it's also important to mention three other S-8 resources: Marvin and Sheila Bernard of Filmlife (141 Moonachie Rd., Moonachie, NJ 07074) who have steadily improved their scratch removal and film rejuvenation service. They can now handle S-8 soundstriped tape-spliced film, as well as any other kind. Also, Phil Vigeant and Rhonda Schuster have revived Super-8 Sound (95 Harvey St., Cambridge, MA 02140) with less of an emphasis on double-system and high-end equipment. Finally, Curt Buchanan (Steel Valley Film Services, 1125 Gill Hall Rd., Clairton PA 15025) continues to supply the all-important Cresta Interface unit for the Elmo GS-1200 projector.

The counterpart of regional consolidation of sources of supplies for S-8 is the development of an international network of S-8 promoters. These persons and organizations have found a center in the International Federation of Super-8 Cinema, Inc. (9155 rue St. Hubert, Montreal, Quebec, Canada). The Federation is to S-8 users what the National Association of Broadcasters is to broadcasters. Through its newsletter (English, French, Spanish) it connects individuals and groups for the exchange of films. Currently, the Federation is urging the government of Brazil, through its members and through its seat on UNESCO's International Council on Cinema and Television, to lift import restrictions on S-8 equipment. Like Quebec, one of Brazil's greatest resources seems to be its amateur filmmakers, who for economic reasons burn their visions onto S-8 film. The Federation promotes the diffusion of these outrageously independent visions throughout the world via national and independent festivals. These festivals have become international gathering places not only for the filmmakers (that eclectic bunch) but also for professionals from the media and entertainment world who are looking for new talent. The screenings at these weekend-to-weeklong events are now as well presented (and annotated) as at the better 16mm festivals. ■

Bob Brodsky & Toni Treadway are the authors of *Super 8 in the Video Age*, which was just translated into Spanish.

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## FIELD REPORTS

# Skewed Priorities Dog Canada's Olympics"

JANE NORTHEY

The posters boasted it was "The Olympics of Video." Video Culture Canada, held last November in Toronto, lasted for six days and offered glittering galas, video screenings, computer graphics, "playlabs," performance art, installations, panel discussions and prizes. But for an "arts" event so heavily funded and strongly supported by corporate and government bodies alike, it was really an "olympics of funding." As all olympics go, only a few could win—and in this case, they were not the artists and producers on whose work the festival based its art content. For independent producers, Video Culture Canada became a classic example of how art patronage built on a hierarchic model can fail.

The founders of VCC, Renya Onasick and Peter Lynch, succeeded in securing financial support on the grounds that VCC would be the first significant "international new media/video festival." But little of that money trickled down to the artists, and the massive corporate support—companies ranging from Sony to Molson's Brewery to Apple Canada to IBM kicked in dollars—meant that artists tended to be valued for their international reputations or their novelties as "techno-oddities." As a result the real content of the artists' works and the context of the productions were overlooked. Who ultimately benefitted from VCC and the lavish funding of patrons? It appears that the "festival" as an entity gained far more than producers or audience.

From the very start payments of artists fees, securing of broadcast rights, and the structure of the event were problematic for independent producers. Well before VCC took place, independent video producers from across Canada took part in a series of discussions which developed into the "Video Alliance." Later discussions were held with Lynch, Onasick, and members of the major arts funding bodies present.

## FEES AND RIGHTS TROUBLE ARTISTS

The original entry requirements envisioned artists paying \$25, as well as giving VCC total broadcast and exhibition rights to their work. All videotapes would also be unconditionally subjected to Ontario Censor Board rulings. Although some of these provisions were later altered, the problems in the original set-up

reflected the attitudes of the event's two architects.

The organizers rationalized the lack of fees by assembling a tape library and exhibition around a competition. Artists could enter tapes to be judged in ten categories:  $\frac{3}{4}$ " international art video, student work, educational work, general public, industrial, community programming, music video, performance/entertainment, video art and computer graphics. The entries were nominated, juried and finally awarded during the closing gala. One prize was awarded in each category; that is, of all the artists who entered work, only ten would receive some kind of remuneration. These awards came in the form of VCC statuettes, video equipment, a \$1,000 lump sum, and in two off-beat cases, an Apple IIe computer and a Japanese plate.

Upon entry, artists forfeited the right to collect an exhibition fee, regardless of how many times their tape was viewed in one of the two collections available for the public's perusal. For \$2, the public could view any of the tapes nominated for a prize in a category. Tapes and segments of tapes were made available for promotional broadcast. Clearly few artists felt the benefits of the seemingly abundant funding.

## ONTARIO BOARD OF CENSORS INTRUDES

Censorship was a more complex problem, due mainly to the venue Onasick and Lynch chose. The Ontario Board of Censors designates specific public locations as under its jurisdiction and Harbourfront (a development with a studio theater, art gallery, cafes, bars, dance theater, elegant shops and luxury condominiums), which housed the festival, is one of them. (Art video falls under a special Censor Board policy, censorship by documentation: by reading a written description, the Board decides if any tapes require its approval.) The simple solution would have been to locate the video screenings elsewhere. However, the decision to exhibit at Harbourfront was obviously made with other considerations in mind.

The Video Alliance made suggestions about these problems to the VCC organizers. Then Onasick and Lynch offered some rather weak solutions: they removed the \$25 entry fee for producers; the entry form included a statement declaring that the artist waived a right to collect an exhibition fee for tapes exhibited in the

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competition although tapes included in the "curated" free video library were paid for; broadcast of material would occur only with the permission of the artists, but no fees would be paid; and, finally, censorship would take the form of Examination by Documentation, resulting in the withdrawal from regular programming of tapes not approved by the Censor Board (thus screenings of such tapes could only be by invitation, private events).

Members of the Video Alliance were left to decide for themselves whether these changes were acceptable. Many felt they were not, and lacking any trust in the administrators' integrity, declined the invitation to participate. As a result, visitors to VCC were not offered the opportunity to see works by internationally established Canadian artists such as Vera Frenkel, Lisa Steele and Randy and Berenici. Nor could Sony or any patron safely say that the organizers had used their funds responsibly in supporting artists' and public needs.

### TECHNO-TITILLATION FOR PUBLIC

In general the public was not aware of this situation. Regardless of the video arts, the attraction for many was the "Playlab," a \$4 per family hands-on booth. Here, in an atmosphere that resembled a trade fair, visitors were encouraged to make their own videotapes or computer art. As an event to draw a wider crowd, the "Playlab" may have introduced people to equipment presently available on the market. It did not necessarily demystify computer or video technology, nor did it build a heightened public awareness of the uses and social impact of these technologies. And, unfortunately for independent mediamakers, the events did nothing to clarify the value of the artists' contributions to the technology.

It's possible that the organizers saw the symposium as the main means of informing the "masses," although at \$10 a panel one wonders whom the discussions were aimed at. Panels chaired by Willoughby Sharp on such topics as "The Role of the New Media/Video Artists in Industry," "Television Art" and "Video Criticism: Several Approaches" featured speakers with reputations in the video/technology field (John Sanborn, Kit Fitzgerald, Louise Etra, Tom Sherman and Kou Nakajima). The panels were televised, and awareness of this plus the amorphous topics may have stifled discussion. In any case, the discussions I attended lacked direction and never tackled issues candidly.

VCC was an instance of how a particular approach to patronage can fail. Had the event been artist-run or had artists even been consulted during the initial organization, the results would have differed drastically. In this case, the funding agencies were not aware of the community's lack of trust in the organizers, nor were they informed about the artists' requirements. As a matter of survival, independent producers must make their demands known. As long as artists remain passive recipients of funding, they will continue to be used as entrepreneurial tools while

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their contributions to society, economic needs and rights will continue to be ignored.

*Jane Northey is a Toronto-based writer and artist.*

## Business as Usual Reigns At AFI-LA Video Festival

Now in its third year, the American Film Institute's National Video Festival has come a long way from its debut, and not simply because its principal location has shifted from the Kennedy Center in Washington to the AFI campus in Hollywood. (Geography can be revealing.) At that first festival, Erik Barnouw in his keynote address spoke of the role, importance and plight of independents and praised them as "society's most important 'safety net.'" This year, Elton Rule, vice chairman of ABC, also spoke of independents and the industry's need for them and their innovative ideas. Referring to programs as products, he asserted that TV is heading towards a convergence of mainstream and alternative television, which has been held back by the slow evolution of the mass audience's taste. (Put the blame on Mame, boys?) Admitting that independents do not want to be "the unpaid research arm for the entertainment industry," Rule could offer independents little more than the satisfaction of being pathfinders gradually affecting the nature and quality of broadcast TV.

In contrast with Barnouw's passionate belief that a new moment which might undermine the communications monopoly in this country was dawning, Rule's dispassionate, detached pronouncements left little doubt that business as usual still rules broadcasting. Only when "new" forms like video games and music video capture the mass audience's interest and dollars is innovation entertained in television.

There is nothing very startling in Elton Rule's remarks, and independents have heard it all before. What is new and discouraging is that AFI's National Video Festival is a vehicle for them, AFI having clearly opted for a safer middle course from the one outlined three years earlier. This year's festival had no clear theme, but rather a collection of diverse concerns. Programs were shown in three categories: music, narrative and documentary. (Music video is increasingly used as a euphemism for video art today.) Panels addressed issues surrounding the making and marketing of interactive videodiscs, music video, and "breakout" or innovative programs in broadcast TV. There were several retrospectives highlighting the pioneering work of Ernie Kovacs; the three public TV labs at WNET, WGBH, and KCET; early independent video; computer graphics and animation; and TV commercials. Whether your interests ran to Goddard or industrial video, there was something for everyone as the festival roamed aimlessly over the video horizon. Controversy was at a minimum; the level of questions reached new lows in technical debriefing and budget analysis; few sessions engaged the audience in

anything beyond a superficial glance at the issues or the aesthetics of video programs.

It is not so much that the festival was bad but that it was so bland. And blandness seems to be the price that AFI is willing to pay to assure its survival. Equally dependent on corporations like ABC and Sony for financial support and on independent producers for creative legitimacy, AFI is trying to please both worlds and, in so doing, is sacrificing its focus. Festival directors James Hindman and Jacqueline Kain have been staunch supporters of independents and can hardly be responsible

for the net effect of institutional compromises and divergent internal concerns.

The National Video Festival started out three years ago as a rallying point for creativity and independence in video and was on its way to becoming the single most important video event in this country. By playing it safe, AFI may be able to assure its survival and that of the festival; but the vitality of the National Video Festival is not so sure. —Deirdre Boyle ■

*Deirdre Boyle is writing a history of documentary video.*

## SCENE AT AFI-LA FESTIVAL



Courtesy Filmmaker



Robert Haller



Don Vallades



Chuck Roche

Shown at the AFI Video Fest: *Perfect Leader* by Max Almy (top left); *Sweet Honey in the Rock* in Michelle Parker's *Gotta Make This Journey* (top right); Abbie Hoffman in Paul Ryan's *Prepoeto People Proto Pre-type*; *L.A. "Nickel"* by Branda Miller (above).



# Southern Indies Tour Home

Victor Nunez and Glen Pitre break new ground in the South; one man told Pitre it's the first time he saw a movie where people talk.

RENEE TAJIMA

Glen Pitre, a Cajun filmmaker who hails from Cutoff, Louisiana tells this story of a trip to New York City after finishing his film *\$8.50!* ("Huit Piastres et Demie!"): "I was eating with a bunch of big distributors. After we finished one of them walked me to the elevator. As I stood inside facing him while the door slowly closed he said to me, 'Beware of the experts.'"

This ominous advice couldn't be more appropriate for southern filmmakers in their efforts to show work below the Mason-Dixon

South lags far behind. Every filmmaker who distributes in the region becomes, in a sense, a pioneer. Louisiana filmmaker Glen Pitre and Floridian Victor Nunez are two whose experiences speak to the range of strategies for barnstorming the South.

## FIRST IN THE BAYOU

Glen Pitre's bayou tour of his 58-minute narrative film *\$8.50!* is the Cajun manifestation of the spirit which moved *Hito Hata: Raise the Banner* throughout Asian American

know a lot of people but at the time it was all seat-of-the-pants." Local theater owners gave more than advice—Pitre remembers having no trouble getting *\$8.50!* booked into everything from "a 'Mom and Pop' to an 80-screen chain," sight unseen.

Pitre found himself in the enviable position of being offered bookings at 12 theaters but choosing to screen at only three. Despite the film's enthusiastic response and a 50-50 share arrangement with the theaters, he was still losing money on the screenings: because of the absence of 16mm projection, Pitre had to buy two arc projectors and hire someone to sit with the film at every showing. In retrospect he regrets not investing in a 35mm blow-up, but at the time the film "just mushroomed too fast," successful beyond any expectations.

And a huge success it was. It's the stuff indie dreams are made of—at one theater *\$8.50!* broke the box office record set by *Star Wars*. Pitre brought in audiences that had not attended *any* movie, much less an independent one, in years. One man told him, "It's the first movie I've ever seen where people talked."

Pitre and a couple of hired hands did everything themselves—booking, promotion, ad design, projection, and selling of *\$8.50!* spin-offs at each showing. "I found out that in most places what I made on t-shirts, caps and posters brought in as much as what I made from the box office," Pitre explained.

Pitre's main problem was being unprepared for success. Without experienced advice, he spent \$3,000 on an ad campaign at one theater spread out over a long period of time, diluting its effectiveness. Distributors later told him that the campaign should have focused on the first week, with an eye to free publicity. In fact the free publicity *\$8.50!* generated proved invaluable. The local press turned out to be his main source of community support.

Pitre intentionally avoided distribution to rep houses in bigger cities and to college towns. He explains, "I wanted to prove that in a rural, grassroots town we could pull people out if it's in French." However, he has no illusions that he has opened new avenues for other indies to follow. "If these films had been in English," Pitre told me, "I wouldn't have gotten the theater, much less drawn a crowd. We could have done well in our home town but those



Cajun tall tales: Louisiana shrimpers in Glen Pitre's *\$8.50* (*Huit Piastres et Demie!*).

line. There is no definitive strategy for taking your film around the South (as I had hoped to find), although there is one oft-mentioned rule-of-thumb: do your research and tailor screenings and publicity to the venue and the audience. The South is a diverse region: from the sophisticated Atlanta audiences which frequent IMAGE programs to the 75% of Pitre's audience who had not been to *any* movie house in 10 years; from the rep houses in major cities and college campuses to multi-screen mall theaters and Main Street picture shows.

While film and video production in the South is vital and growing despite the "talent drain" to the cultural mecca which plagues any outer region, indie exhibition throughout the

communities. Produced in 1979 for \$30,000 and released in 1981, it is the first Cajun-language, Cajun-produced film ever made. 27-year-old Pitre, who grew up on Bayou Lafourche, called upon the Cajun tradition of tall tales to recount the 1938 shrimp war between local canneries and shrimpers. Pitre cast his own father Loulan Pitre as Daize Cheramie, the shrimpers' union president, while the townspeople of Larose, Cutoff, Galliano and Golden Meadow comprised the remaining cast of hundreds.

When Pitre finished the film, he discovered his work was just beginning: "I couldn't find anyone around here for advice, so I asked theater owners... If I was doing it now I'd



cities miles away... they came because it was in French." This thinking governed his broader distribution strategy. "I jumped from the Bayou to Baton Rouge, then jumped to Montreal and went straight to France."

Despite the enormous legwork involved in barnstorming with \$8.50!, Pitre plans to do it again with his upcoming feature *Acadian Waltz*. He will shoot two versions: an English one to be released by a traditional distributor, and a French version to be self-distributed in the manner of \$8.50!

### SELLING GAL YOUNG 'UN

When Victor Nunez completed his first feature *Gal Young 'Un* in 1979, he dove into the exhilarating, consuming first wave of the indie feature movement. A Florida-born and based college professor, Nunez adapted *Gal Young 'Un* from a story by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings about a plain Florida backwoods widow who marries a good-for-nothing young bootlegger during Prohibition. Like Pitre and other indie dramatists, Nunez relied on many non-professionals for his cast, including an English professor named Dana Preu who played the lead role of widow Mattie Siles.

First screenings at the Atlanta International Film Festival and the American Independents program in the New York Film Festival made it clear that Nunez had an unexpected hit. But in contrast to Pitre, Nunez set his sights on broader national—and European—distribution. *Gal Young 'Un* was then blown up to 35mm and made the festival scene: taking prizes at Cannes and going on to Edinburgh, London, Toronto and others. The South became only one component of a broader strategy, although the South Carolina Arts Commission—one of the film's first exhibitors—included the film on its Southern Circuit tour.

On the heels of *Northern Lights'* barnstorming from town to town across the country, Nunez turned down "pretty good offers from distributors," opting instead to distribute the film himself in conjunction with the fledgling filmmakers cooperative First Run Features and the Independent Feature Project (IFP). Nunez remembers the excitement of this "first rush" of interest in indie features: "At the beginning of IFP there were a lot of romantic ideals about how 'we're going to break new ground,' with a fresh, new kind of distribution as well as filmmaking."

However, Nunez did not embark on the exhausting task of barnstorming self-distribution as Sandra Schulberg had done with *Northern Lights*. First Run released *Gal Young 'Un* in 1981 and handled bookings and publicity, although Nunez did travel to the film's openings and spent an extended amount of time on its promotion. "Now I always tell people that when you finish a feature, be ready to spend a year promoting it," Nunez recounts. "I didn't know that then."

The *Gal Young 'Un* tour of the South was completely organized out of New York by First Run and IFP, with the exception of local

screenings in home markets like Tallahassee and Gainesville. The film's success in the South was uneven. It did well at rep houses and is still generating 16mm rentals at film societies and colleges. But it has not done especially well in the theatrical market. "The South is a tough market," Nunez points out. "You really have to have a place where there's a creative exhibitor who is committed to independents."

### SOUTHERN CIRCUITRY

The groundwork for more creative exhibition in the South is being largely laid by various regional media arts centers. Groups such as the Alabama Filmmakers Coop, the New Orleans Video Art Center (NOVAC), the Sinking Creek Film Celebration, the South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC), the Southwest Alternative Media Center (SWAMP) and IMAGE in Atlanta provide consultation, package tours, offer exhibition space, and give a lot of moral support. Pitre cites SWAMP's concrete and moral support as invaluable—they located him in the bayou, notified him of funding deadlines, set up an \$8.50! screening at the Rice Media Center, and submitted the *Acadian Waltz* script to the Sundance Institute. (Pitre has just returned from Sundance, and American Playhouse will produce the film.)

"There's no established network, so you have to create your own each time," said Susan Leonard, coordinator of SCAC's Southern Circuit, speaking of the plight of independents in the South. Southern Circuit is sponsored annually to open new venues and audiences for independent work. SWAMP organizes the 10-site Southwest Film and Video Tour in Texas and hopes to expand it to other states.

Michael Fleischman, director of SCAC's Media Center, suggests working with state humanities councils which have their own long-standing networks of cultural programming in local communities, or little-recognized resources such as the departments of parks, recreation and tourism and other existing institutions.

This applies for non-regional filmmakers as well. New York-based Third World Newsreel is applying a combination of the barnstorming strategy with that suggested by Fleischman for a series of openings of *Mississippi Triangle*, a feature documentary on Chinese, black and white relations throughout the South. Newsreel is setting up screenings in cooperation with local community groups, scholars, arts centers and other existing networks from the Clarksdale (Mississippi) Public Library to one of Montgomery, Alabama's newly-renovated picture palaces now run by a local community activist group.

Media centers such as Appalshop in Whitesburg, Kentucky, the Center for Southern Folklore in Memphis, Tennessee, and the Highlander Center in Knoxville, Tennessee are production units as well as distributors—

(continued on p. 28)  
(see p. 27 for "Theatrical Distribution in the South" address box)

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# Club Video: Art or Wallpaper?

*"Too often the screening of video art in rock clubs and bars is an acrimonious balancing act between the forces of Art and Business."*

ARLENE ZEICHNER

Bert Ball, plucky art video programmer at New York's Redbar, sighed and considered his words. "Well," he said at last, "when I show good tapes, people don't talk; when I show bad tapes they do. When I show good tapes, people don't buy drinks; when I show bad tapes they do. So when the bar complains, I'm happy."

Ball can afford to poke fun at his somewhat paradoxical position—his Wednesday night series is a demonstrable success—but too often the screening of video art in rock clubs and bars is an acrimonious balancing act between opposing forces of Art and Business. Most artists want to screen their tapes in optimum conditions—no noise, no clinking drinks, attentive audience, low lights. Most club owners, oblivious to ordinary aesthetics, see beauty created at the bottom line of the number of drinks sold. Engrossing video doesn't sell drinks; boredom and, more often, the sensationalism of rock promos do. As a result, current art video is relegated to off nights at clubs—if it is shown at all.

Yet in the days before MTV, 1980 and early 1981, club video was a hot event for both artists and club managers. Innovation was key and a booming audience swarmed to the clubs just to catch this latest wrinkle in late-night entertainment, sitting mesmerized before multiple monitors playing montaged images from numerous sources—NASA footage, archival film, old TV—to the accompaniment of theme music. Sometimes the marriage of sound and image resulted in a riveting comment on post-modern culture; at other times the effect was disjunctive and the audience switched channels of attention from music to visuals and back again.

Club veejays also showcased video artists: Shalom Gorewitz, Sanborn/Fitzgerald, Jane and Jeff Hudson. And video artists went to work as veejays to learn about music. Merrill Aldighieri, the first woman veejay, claims, "I did eight hours per night of visual programming. It made me produce a ton of visuals and made me very oriented to what type of visuals go to music." Aldighieri and many other artist/veejays—such as John Sanborn, Maureen Nappi, Charlie Libin, Don Letts—went on to do more commercial work in video music. In fact, Aldighieri just produced one of the first Sony Video 45s. Called *Danspak*, it features

many of the bands—Richard Bone, Pulssilama, Living, Shox Lumania—that she first came to know as a veejay.

Other artist/producers also initially reacted to this new venue with pleasure and antici-

stage.) And she received calls citing other examples of illegal dubbing of her work.

Birnbaum didn't bring suit against the clubs—after all, her tapes rely on off-air footage, recorded without copyright permission—but became considerably less sanguine about the possibilities of club video. "It just doesn't look like a permanent solution," she said recently, "though, by osmosis, it did whet the appetite of a younger generation that wouldn't go to the Whitney."

## SMOKY ROOMS

Many artists share Birnbaum's wariness—and her fascination with the club audience. Paul Dougherty, a populist, comparing clubs to the more elitist gallery experience, said, "You're not sitting silently in a straight-backed chair. It's fun being right there in the marketplace with conversation, smoky rooms and drinks in hand."

Being in the marketplace does have its disadvantages: the audience/consumer gets to determine presentation. And the rock club audience wanted to listen to rock and roll. As a result, many clubs presented artist-produced videos without their integral sound so that music could be heard. Carole Anne Klonarides, a former veejay at New York's Peppermint Lounge, remembers, "Most club audiences weren't visually articulate. If I forgot sound, people would tap on the veejay booth door; if I forgot visuals, no one would say anything."

Clearly, then, artist works in clubs were not treated with gallery-like care: they were chopped up, overdubbed and, all too often, ignored completely. To make matters worse, artists were rarely paid rental fees; instead, they were given a few drink tickets. More and more artists refused to show their work in clubs. So by 1982, the barely three-year-old club art video phenomenon was almost a victim of infant mortality.

In early 1982, a brief reprise occurred: rock impresario Jim Fouratt decided that video art should be integrated into club practice. He hired John Sanborn and Kit Fitzgerald to produce video at his new club, Danceteria. As artists themselves, Sanborn and Fitzgerald viewed their mandate as protecting and showing videoworks in the best possible light. And



Mudd Club-ites gaze at big screen (top); Michael Auder's *Morocco Diaries* showed at the Redbar (bottom).

tion, hoping that art-oriented video-music, like the then-popular new wave music, would be able to crossover, making the type of barely compromised switch from art-house to mass audience recently accomplished by bands such as the Talking Heads and Blondie. Dara Birnbaum, one of the first artists to work closely with musicians, shipped her tapes to clubs across the country—Washington DC, Texas, and even to Canada. Later she was shocked to learn that a clip from her tape *Kojak Wang* was presented, without credit, as a preface to the notorious Public Image performance at the Ritz. (The band, much to the chagrin of the bottle-throwing audience, opted to remain behind a screen rather than appearing on



Fouratt's support protected Sanborn and Fitzgerald's efforts from managerial and musical interference. Their video lounge and regularly scheduled screenings of work by video artists met with good artist and audience response; the more innovative presentations that juxtaposed video and performance—such as an evening with Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman—were especially popular. Rumor had it that Fouratt planned to expand the video activities, but he was forced to leave the club in late 1982. (Fitzgerald and Sanborn left soon after.)

#### CLUB MANAGERS KEY FACTOR

The experience with Fouratt underscores the effect of an interested club manager on video presentation. Most current club owners care little about art video and don't devote any staff resources to it. The scant work shown is usually supplied by rock video distributors—Rock-

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#### Sound & Vision

Tima Surmelioglu  
225 Park Ave. South, Suite 308  
NY NY 10003  
(212) 255-9204

America, Zoom and Sound and Vision. All are willing to distribute the work of artists but they tend to focus on tapes easily adaptable to the club scene: silent works or those heavily reliant on special effects. Even so, distributors indicated that these works were considerably more difficult to sell than those of the latest rock groups. Tima Surmelioglu of Sound and Vision estimates that she rents 10 times as many rock and roll reels as artist tapes. And even that requires special effort—she must personally phone club veejays and convince them of the strength of her work.

Gallery distributors, by choice, rarely supply work to the club scene. Laurie Zippay of Electronic Arts Intermix, one of the leading distributors of art tapes, explains, "We've been approached by many, but have made arrangements with none." Why? "Because we

### GROWING PAINS

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haven't been approached with a satisfactory arrangement." That is, most clubs refuse to pay for the work. Both Zippay and Barbara Osborne of The Kitchen have supplied tapes to a few clubs, notably Danceteria, the Redbar and a small club in Austin called Nightlife that recently began regularly scheduled video screenings.

Osborne feels that video art in bars is "particularly valuable outside New York where there aren't any venues," but complains that regional video in clubs, generated out of a "paucity of resources," generally dies as soon as a gallery opens—or a new club owner gets hip to the fact that rock and roll sells more drinks than art video. Gallery curators from Chicago's Randolph Street Gallery to San Francisco's La Mamelle concur with Osborne's conclusions. (The screenings at Nightlife will be suspended when a local gallery opens in early 1984.) Happily, one video curator, Neil Seiling, has been able to use club screenings to his advantage as hip advertisements for his gallery, University Community Video. He has programmed several shows at Minneapolis' First Avenue Club and reports that audiences at out-of-the-way UCV have increased as a result.

#### MULTI-MEDIA FUTURE

It is fitting that club video can help support art organizations; after all, the earliest club videos often took place at transformed art galleries. In 1980, San Francisco's club video was spawned at an alternative space by a collective group of artists—ARE—who turned the space into a bar one evening per week. And Tom Bowes, former video curator at The Kitchen, presented early shows of video music in a lounge-like set-up at the gallery that helped shape the local late-night video scene.

Artist participation in club video may once again become imperative: with the proliferation of MTV and MTV-clones—"Friday Night Videos," "New York Hot Rocks," "Radio 1990"—the club-going video audience will demand more than just another version of weekend late-night TV. Multimedia shows, joining work of live performers and video artists with the common thread of music, are sure to be the next phase. It'll take a while for the music business to reformat this new style for mass consumption. Meanwhile, video artists would do well to heed Kit Fitzgerald's advice that "clubs are a good place to pull a young audience away from the MTV mentality and start complicating their ideas about television." ■

Arlene Zeichner is a New York-based freelance writer.



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# To the Source in Latin America

"I mention no names, real or assumed; I just call them comrades."  
—Song of the Tupamaros, urban guerrilla group in Uruguay.

SUSAN LINFIELD

Television news is often credited with bringing the Vietnam War into America's living rooms. This popular theory is debatable—TV certainly did not bring us, for instance, the reasons for the war, the history of Vietnam, or the views of the North Vietnamese. However, it did, with grim regularity, put napalmed children, burning Buddhists and summary executions (if not Thieu's "monkey cages") on the evening news.

But if television brought us at least some version of Vietnam, it has, by and large, kept Latin America from us. Where were the TV crews in the 1970s when the left "disappeared" in Argentina or the Tupamaros were hunted down? Countries such as El Salvador do make it onto the screen, but usually only if their governments are dependent on US aid. What network has turned its cameras on the fighting in Guatemala, the torture chambers in Chile, the massacres in Peru? It has been left largely to independent filmmakers to notice, investigate, analyze and document these conflicts; when the networks do deign to cover these stories, they often rely on independent footage.

While independents may have taken it upon themselves to "tell the world," the situation has also raised several difficult issues for them. How does one establish and contact sources in a dangerous situation? How should one represent oneself to the left and the right? What is the role of a US journalist? How does one protect footage (and oneself) from the "wrong" side? Most importantly, perhaps, how do you tell a person's story without thereby endangering his or her life—and if you can't, is the story worth it? Shooting under physically and politically dangerous conditions in Latin America, all these issues become intertwined.

## ESTABLISHING SOURCES

It is one's contacts and credibility (as a journalist) that are the key. Above photo: Facing death in Guatemala: "When the Mountains Tremble."

nalist and a human being) among people in danger which forms the basis for many independents' work and which, they often feel, distinguishes it from that of TV journalists. Rachel Field, an ex-professor of visual anthropology at Hampshire College who is currently making a film on the Mapuche Indians of Chile (called *Marrichi-Hueu*, or "Ten Times We Will Overcome") said, "You can't just bop in and out of a country. In my case the links grew organically out of solidarity work I had done for many years. The sources were there. It has to do with why you're doing a film, if you're doing it to help people be seen and heard. If that's true, your history of involvement will mean that those links can be created." Martin Lucas, co-director of *Camino Triste: The Hard Road of the Guatemalan Refugees* said "gringos were basically bad news" among the Guatemalans living in southern Mexico whom he videotaped. "Trust was the crucial element," Lucas said. "The only way to do it was to be introduced through third parties—not only for political reasons, but also because the roads were bad and the maps all wrong." Lucas said that he and his co-producer Nancy Peckenhams made an exploratory visit to each camp before shooting anything, "both for their safety and ours."

Producer Alex Drehsler, a former reporter for the *San Diego Union* who covered the Nicaraguan Revolution, said his past work was "incalculably important" in establishing contacts for *El Salvador: In the Name of the People*. His sources among the international brigades who had fought with the Sandinistas contacted representatives of the FMLN-FDR (El Salvador's coalition of opposition groups), who helped smuggle him into the country along the Honduran-Salvadoran arms supply route and allowed him to film in Guazapa, a guerrilla-controlled zone. Thomas Sigel, who has shot in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, said that most Latin American opposition organizations have

representatives in the US who establish contacts for his film work. "It's a very tricky thing to talk about contacts for illegal activities," Sigel said. "Hundreds of people become involved in getting journalists into a guerrilla operation."

The question of sources is also the question of a filmmaker's relation to his subject—an issue raised in any documentary film. "It's exacerbated when you're working under conditions of military dictatorship or war," Field said, "but the same questions arise in an anthropological context. The only answer is to have a long-standing relationship with and commitment to the people you're filming—not only so that they understand the film, but also so they're involved in the process of making it. This presupposes a different attitude than news-gathering."

## PRESS POWER

While "gringos are bad news," US press coverage is nevertheless often desired by both the left and the right. "There was always a feeling that the most important film on Salvador had to be made by North Americans," said Glenn Silber, co-producer of *El Salvador: Another Vietnam*, often considered the film which "broke" the Salvador story in the US press. "This was a strong card for us [in terms of the left]. Because no matter how many films were made in Mexico City, the madness wouldn't stop unless North Americans saw it." Silber, who was backed by PBS money, also benefited from the American Embassy's eagerness to present its views: the Embassy helped arrange interviews with high Salvadoran government officials, although it refused to let him interview then-US Ambassador Robert White.

Tom Sigel, whose work often includes interviews with right-wing generals and scenes of army brutality, said, "The power of the North



American press is not to be underestimated. But there is a big difference between filming in El Salvador and Guatemala. The US is bank-rolling El Salvador, so there's much more motivation to be filmed: the government spends time trying to find things that look good for the press. The Guatemalan government isn't supported by us, so it doesn't give a damn." Nevertheless, for their film *When the Mountains Tremble* Sigel and co-director Pamela Yates managed to spend a week living and travelling with a unit of the Guatemalan Army on an "anti-subversive" mission, filming such incriminating scenes as an army roundup of an entire village. "But the army thought that was great," Sigel said. "They thought it showed that people support the army. They have a very different idea of what looks good."

For *Nicaragua: Report from the Front*, Sigel and Yates spent several months trying unsuccessfully to get into "contra" (US-supplied anti-Sandinista) training camps in Honduras. "Finally," Sigel said, "I think the CIA made a decision to open it up to the press. Clearly the contras had wanted to talk, but there was a very heavy decision not to let us in, to the extent that even a Honduran soldier wouldn't take a bribe. And if a Honduran soldier won't take a bribe, you *know* that something's up. But then they told us that 'blue eyes' had said it was OK. We took that to mean the CIA. And right after us, they let in a number of other journalists."

Many independents ally themselves with a network when working in Latin America for security and credibility reasons. Sigel, who has worked frequently for CBS, said, "If you say you're an independent filmmaker in Latin America, it's like you're a Martian. The authorities have no way to deal with it." The left, too, is often impressed with network credentials. In *The Name of the People*'s director Frank Christopher said his CBS tie (the network paid for his trip to El Salvador on the condition that it would have first option on any footage) was very important to the guerrillas: "They wanted their story to get out." However, the value of the CBS connection evaporated with startling speed once Christopher and crew left the "liberated zone" and entered San Salvador. Christopher said that a guerrilla who was captured by the army revealed under torture that the filmmakers had been up in the mountains with the insurgents, "at which point CBS told us, 'Goodbye—don't contact us until you're out of the country.'" The crew managed to gain asylum in the Mexican Embassy for a week and was then deported to Mexico City; their Super-8 footage, which they had buried up in the mountains, was subsequently smuggled by guerrillas to a CBS contact in San Salvador, and then sent to the US.

Nevertheless, Sigel said, North American journalists are very privileged people in Latin America: "The situation changed after they killed Bill Stuart [ABC reporter killed by Somoza forces in 1979]. That was the final nail in the coffin: the negative publicity of it was just too much." Or, as Emilio Rodriguez, a Puerto Rican filmmaker who works with Incine (the Nicaraguan Film Institute) said,



FMLN guerrillas training in the mountains: El Salvador: Another Vietnam.

"They'll kill Dutch journalists [four Dutch journalists were killed by Salvadoran government forces in 1982], because no one cares what the Dutch think. But they care about the Americans."

#### PROTECTING SOURCES

It is not so much in protecting themselves but rather in protecting their subjects that many independents seem to have the greatest questions and deepest doubts. Who decides what is safe, what is useful, what is "worth it" to shoot? Here, the judgment of the filmmaker and his subject combined with the political particularities of the country in which he works all weave a complex mosaic of decision.

"If you're dealing with a [political] organization, you have to trust that organization about what you can and can't film," Tom Sigel said. In the case of *When the Mountains Tremble*, Sigel said the URNG (National Revolutionary Unity of Guatemala, a coalition of opposition groups) determined what was appropriate to shoot. The peasants he filmed, Sigel said, "were already burned—they had already clearly been identified as enemies of the army."

Still, there were many gray areas. Sigel's film contains a closeup interview of a neighborhood activist speaking about government kidnappings; that man himself is later "disappeared" and, in the film, his neighbors praise him and later attend his funeral. The neighbors "clearly made the decision that they wanted to talk," Sigel said. "But they were also clearly very upset. Was it the right decision?" Sigel and Yates spent the next several days in the neighborhood to give people time to decide if they wanted to appear in the film. The decision was yes. "They felt they were under attack already, and it wouldn't hurt. They thought it might help. And they didn't say anything ter-

ribly subversive: if they're in jeopardy it's for other things they've done, not this film."

"How do you know what's safe?" Rachel Field asked. "You *must* know. Again, it's a question of how you work. People will orient you if you're close to them. One learns how to write in code, how not to keep phone numbers." Speaking of the Chilean resistance she said, "Many of them have been living clandestinely for 10 years. They know what precautions to take."

When shooting in El Salvador, Alex Drehsler requested a full-time liaison from the FMLN-FDR who could guide him in questions of security, advising him not only on which people were safe to film but also on such matters as camp locations. Drehsler said the people he shot "were already in the greatest danger: they're with the guerrillas, behind the lines. There really isn't any more danger they could be in." But even here the situation can be fluid. Drehsler filmed FDR member Saul Billalta addressing guerrilla troops before an attack; Billalta later left the "liberated zone" and returned to the city. At that point the FMLN advised the filmmakers to remove him from their film, as his identity was no longer safe. But Billalta was subsequently captured and tortured, and is now presumed dead; in conjunction with the FMLN, the filmmakers then decided to restore him into the film.

Exacerbating security worries is the absolute conviction among all the filmmakers interviewed that the army and government would obtain, or at least see, their works. Emilio Rodriguez recalled a press conference in San Salvador during which a government official showed footage the government had pilfered off a major US network's satellite transmitter the previous day, much to the dismay of the network's reporter who was in the audience. Lucas said that, before any publicity on his tape had been released, his distributor received





"In the Name of the People": Teenage guerrillas in El Salvador; two were killed shortly after this photo was taken.

a request for a copy from the US Embassy in Guatemala. Silber said the CIA requested a copy of his film, "which we declined. But I assumed that the State Department would get a copy one way or another, which they could send to the Salvadoran government. But if you keep thinking of that, you'll end up doing nothing."

### THE GOOD AND THE BAD

There seem to be two situations where people are most willing to appear on camera: where the situation is so bad that they have little left to lose, or so good that they are no longer afraid. Rodriguez, who worked with an international press corps documenting the Sandinista uprising in 1979, said, "There were many young people wearing ski masks and kerchiefs over their faces. They weren't showing off, playing guerrilla; they were afraid that if their identities were revealed, Somoza's security forces would carry out revenge against their families. But most of the people saw the victory coming, the Somoza regime crumbling so fast, that they just didn't care at that point."

But for many, it is desperation, not victory foreseen, which prompts them. This has not produced a glib "it doesn't matter anyway" attitude among independents but, rather, a grim awareness of the stakes of daily life in many countries. "I don't know if it makes sense to speak of reprisals when people are constantly harassed and repressed," Field said of her 1983 trip to Chile. "By their very work, their very nature, they're subject to such repression—the government doesn't need a film. People face, almost with a sense of resignation, that the stakes are extremely high: disappearance brutality. I was walking down the street with a friend and she pointed and said, 'That's a *casa de tortura*' [torture house]. There it is. That's part of their life. They've been in the stadium

[the Santiago Stadium where thousands of people were tortured and killed during the 1973 coup] and gotten out. They're fighting. They want to speak out."

Speaking of the Guatemalan Indians, a traditionally isolated group, Lucas said, "It's a sign of their desperation [that they are talking to the press]. They have so little to lose. The situation is so bad, they felt it was worth taking the risk. Everybody we interviewed was scared; we really had to weigh the benefits and drawbacks. There were several cases where people had good stories but it just wasn't worth shooting: they were too identifiable, and their families were still inside Guatemala." Or, as Silber said of his work in El Salvador, "It's hard for us as Americans to realize the risks of everyday life there. When they open their mouths it's because they're suffering so much that they want to explain what the hell's happening."

Not all people in a given situation are equally at risk, and several filmmakers stressed the importance of sensitivity to the various life choices people have made. People who have decided to take up arms are, obviously, in a different situation from those who may be offering them secret support. "There's a difference between appearing on screen saying 'I'm a guerrilla' and standing with your baby at a baptism," Sigel said. Lucas said the spokespersons in his tape were often the local leaders who had chosen to speak out "and were already in danger." Silber included some closeup interviews with women in a refugee camp which was not identified and who, he said, were not traceable: "We didn't go to such lengths to protect them. I didn't feel they were in such jeopardy: their story was the same as everyone else's—the army has destroyed all their lives. You can't get totally paranoid or you'll end up making a film where you just interview government officials."

### UNDERSTANDING RISKS

The question of a subject's understanding and use of the media arises repeatedly when filming in Latin America. "When you're approaching people and talking to them, it's easy to assume a great sophistication of the media, which people often don't have," Sigel said. "It's putting a great responsibility on them. But some people do decide to take risks, to consciously put themselves in danger, and you have to respect that. It might be presumptuous *not* to use that footage. You really have to evaluate how much the person you're filming understands the implications of what you're doing."

Such a situation faced Silber and co-producer Tete Vasconcellos in making *Another Vietnam*, which contains a powerful closeup interview with a refugee camp worker talking about ORDEN (right-wing death squad) atrocities. "Obviously there's one guy in our film we didn't protect," Silber said. "He felt compelled to talk. We told him they might take him away after the film aired. But when he heard he could speak to a million Americans—how is someone like that going to say no, given the situation and history of his country? He said, 'Load the camera.' He was so deeply committed to speaking: it was the hope of his life. He speaks with such conviction and courage—would filming him in silhouette, or with a mask on, have allowed him to make his point? And it was clear that this guy was already putting himself in jeopardy—marked—just by the work he was doing. For the human rights workers in Salvador, it's almost just a matter of time: they can change the way they walk to work, but at some point they'll probably get picked up. So his choice was simple. But our choice was not simple."

Silber filmed another human rights worker with his back to the camera but, he said, "When I got back home I thought: 'You can still see his shirt.' And he probably only has two or three shirts.' You're kidding yourself if you think you've protected them."

The connection between appearing in a film and subsequent events in a person's life can never really be known, especially since many people appearing on camera are already "marked." A peasant in Lucas' tape speaks about the army's murder of his son; two months later, the army came back and killed his daughter. The ex-president of Salvador's Human Rights Commission, who altered her appearance substantially for her interview in *Another Vietnam*, is now dead. But the cause and effect relation, if any, is unknown.

Nevertheless, said Alex Drehsler, "the worry is always there for me. Should I film this? But I've met a lot of photographers and reporters interested only in getting the story. I've never yet come across a network reporter who asked, 'What will this do to the people?' They say, 'Hey, I'm not a censor. He chose to talk.' Their major concern is to beat the competition for the story. Our position as in-

(continued on p. 28)

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1984



# Asian American Indies Gain PTV Exposure

*"Silk Screen," packaging eight indie films, promotes minority viewpoints on public airwaves, but raises issues of ghettoization and non-priority scheduling.*

LUIS H. FRANCIA

Last fall, Asian Americans, part of the Great Ignored, had a chance to view views on them, by them, and for them (and the rest of the television public). But because of its nonprime-time slot, and delayed scheduling on the nation's largest public TV station (New York's Channel 13) *Silk Screen*, as the series is known, may not get the applause it deserves. What is the sound of one hand clapping? What, indeed?

Considering the infrequency of minority programs on TV produced by minorities themselves, the debut of *Silk Screen*, with Robert Ito of *Quincy* as host, was some kind of coup: the first time the Public Broadcasting Service had acquired a series of programs by and about Asian Americans. Consisting of six half-hour programs encompassing eight short films, *Silk Screen* was transmitted by PBS on Sundays last fall. I use the qualifying phrase "some kind" because PBS chose to transmit at 10 pm, outside of the core schedule.

"Core schedule" refers to programs aired Sunday through Wednesday on the prime-time slot of 8 pm to 10 pm, programs that close to 90% of the public TV stations commit themselves to carrying at the time of transmission. The rest of the time the stations can choose which programs best fit their needs. This prime time schedule is drawn up by PBS's program department, which then submits the proposed schedule to a committee made up of 10 to 15 reps from individual stations. This committee may suggest changes, but PBS still has final say.

The different stations don't have to follow PBS's scheduling priorities—i.e., a station can broadcast a PBS nonprime time program on its prime time. Of the PTV outlets in six major cities (Honolulu, Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco, Washington DC, and New York), only New York's WNYC UHF Channel 31 broadcast the series at prime time—9:30 pm on Wednesdays. San Francisco video artist Spencer Nakasako, who with Vincent DiGirolamo made *Monterey's Boat People*, part of the series, is particularly upset with San Francisco's KQED-TV for airing the series after prime time (10:30 pm on Wednesdays) when four of the artists involved are from there. He points out that "many local white video artists do similar work and are shown on primetime."

After considerable back and forth within the station, New York's Channel 13 decided to run *Silk Screen* this January and February on Sundays at 11:30 pm. Media schedulers are once again routing a worthy minority effort off the main road.

Still, PBS's acceptance of the series is grudging acknowledgement of the politics of pres-

120% jump in a decade. In short, the market is there, particularly in urban areas where the largest public TV outlets and most Asians are. An agency like PBS, once encrusted with routine and respectability, behaves neither like a fool or a visionary. In the case of *Silk Screen*, it's hedging its bets.

## NEED TO EXPLAIN ONESELF?

The main thrust of the series is explanatory/expository. (This is not to cavil as it fills a large gap in the perceptions of both the public and the media.) The eight films focus principally on concerns that have always been central to immigrants in this country—e.g., the refugee question (*Bittersweet Survival*, *Monterey's Boat People*); underpaid labor and unionization (*Sewing Woman*, *Pinoy*); a traditional art, tattooing (*Tattoo City*); and rediscovering one's cultural roots (*China: Land of My Fathers*). Despite two centuries of existence, Asian America remains an odd and appealing mixture of enigma and exotica for mainstream society. Being born here and growing up American would seem to preclude the need to explain oneself. And yet Asian Americans are always having to explain themselves, a common lament particularly among artists.

The most obvious reason is the media's rather narrow focus—a combination of pop sociology and sensationalism, conditioned by a history of stereotyping and prejudice. Robert Ito, *Silk Screen* host, complains that much TV writing is full of stereotyping, that "the people who write these stories haven't done their homework." He hopes *Silk Screen* "opens the door for both young and experienced filmmakers."

With the broadcast of *Silk Screen* the door does open, but how wide? Is the opening a pigeonhole of comfortable assumptions and presumptions? James Yee, executive director of the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), cites the dangers of ghettoization. "We would like to place works by Asians on non-Asian subjects." Put another way, Nam June Paik gets a show at the Whitney, but will he be aired on PBS? The dilemma holds true for all experimental film and video artists, but the minority indie artist is in a double bind.



Arthur Dong's "Sewing Woman" as a girl in China.

sure. Independent video and filmmakers in the minority communities have in the past criticized PBS for neglecting minority programming. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Barry Chase, director of PBS news and public affairs, conceded that such criticism has spurred a search for broader perspectives that would include minority viewpoints. He went on to say that PBS is developing a "coterie of producers who either are part of these minority groups, or especially sensitive to the interests of these groups."

Nothing is done out of sheer altruism, of course. PBS's move toward minorities makes sense in purely pragmatic terms. The Asian American population, for instance, is the fastest-growing in the United States, with Hispanics a close second. According to the 1980 census there are 3.5 million Asians (the real figure is almost certainly much higher)—a



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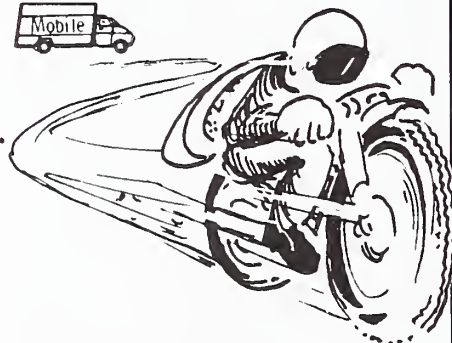
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**Monterey's boat people: Is Silk Screen presenting or ghettoizing them?**

In nonexperimental areas that aren't specifically "ethnic," the minority artist is regarded with special skepticism—as though the artist were straying beyond his or her cultural imperative. The implied comment behind the arched eyebrow is, "You're good at documenting your cultural rites, but are you sure you can handle something else?" Were such straying to become the norm, media power brokers would be forced to dispense with limits they've set for the minority artist.

### FROM ARTIST TO CONSORTIUM TO AIRWAVES

*Silk Screen* was packaged by the San Francisco-based, nonprofit NAATA as a major step in its commitment to upgrade television and radio programming on Asian American themes. Specifically formed to acquire and distribute film, video, and radio works by Asian American indies, NAATA is unlike other consortia working collaboratively with PBS—it isn't a station project, and it consists of people actively involved with film, either as filmmakers, producers or cinematographers. NAATA's budget is made up mainly of funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and various lesser grants. James Yee describes the CPB funding as "seed money."

Work on the series started in June 1982 when NAATA began screening the first of 64 submissions. By March of this year, the complete program of eight films were chosen: *Bittersweet Survival* by Christine Choy and J.T. Takagi; *Sewing Woman* by Arthur Dong; *Pinoy* by Deborah Bock; *Monterey's Boat People* by Spencer Nakasako and Vincent DiGirolamo; *With Silk Wings: On New Ground* by Loni Ding; *China: Land of My Fathers* by Felicia Lowe; *Tattoo City* and *Emiko* by Emiko Omori. The selection is noteworthy for the number of projects by women—six—and for its nonstereotypical views of Asian American women at work.

In May PBS agreed to take on the series. Asked why NAATA decided to approach PBS directly rather than individual stations—the usual route taken by independents—project director Louise Lo (herself an independent director and producer) stated, "We decided to go for as much exposure as possible by approaching the national distributor." (Actually, had NAATA decided to approach in-

dividual stations it would have stood just as good or even better a chance of getting national exposure. As PBS statistics indicate, most programs it distributes do in fact originate from individual stations. For instance, in 1980 the member stations produced 72.8% of PBS's schedule, at a cost of \$59.5 million or 56.6% of the schedule cost.)

### NAATA OFFERS HELPING HAND

NAATA's role is obviously invaluable to Asian American indies. To cite one instance: Arthur Dong (*Sewing Woman*), who describes the airing of *Silk Screen* as "terrific," recounts how, since his film is only 14 minutes long, PBS wouldn't take it even though schedulers showed some interest. It was suggested that if he agreed to the film being used as a filler—"rather insulting," in Dong's opinion—or if he could find another film to go with it as a package, an airing might be quite possible. NAATA's project resolved Dong's dilemma, relieving him of the extracinematic burden of packaging.

Since the series' format is a half hour, some films had to be cut. This task fell to cinematographer Michael Chin (*Chan Is Missing*, *American Samurai*), who then worked closely with the filmmakers. According to Lo, "all of the changes were minor." In the case of the 30-minute *Pinoy*, the story of a Filipino immigrant laborer who becomes active in union organizing, NAATA sought and obtained permission from its producers to use excerpts. NAATA paid fees to filmmakers ranging from \$60 to \$75 a minute.

NAATA had hoped to get promotion funds from PBS as well, but had to turn to such other sources as Chevron and Chemical Bank when informed that a moratorium had been imposed on the use of step-up funds and that such funds were being allocated only for Wednesday specials. This was especially disappointing since NAATA has furnished *Silk Screen* to PBS free of charge. Currently, according to Yee, NAATA is involved in radio program acquisition and co-production. Two-and-a-half-hour segments, he says, "should probably be available in early January." There are also plans for a work that will satirize how Asian Americans react to everyday American culture. "It will," promises Yee, "poke fun at ourselves."

Luis H. Francia is a poet, writer and movie buff.

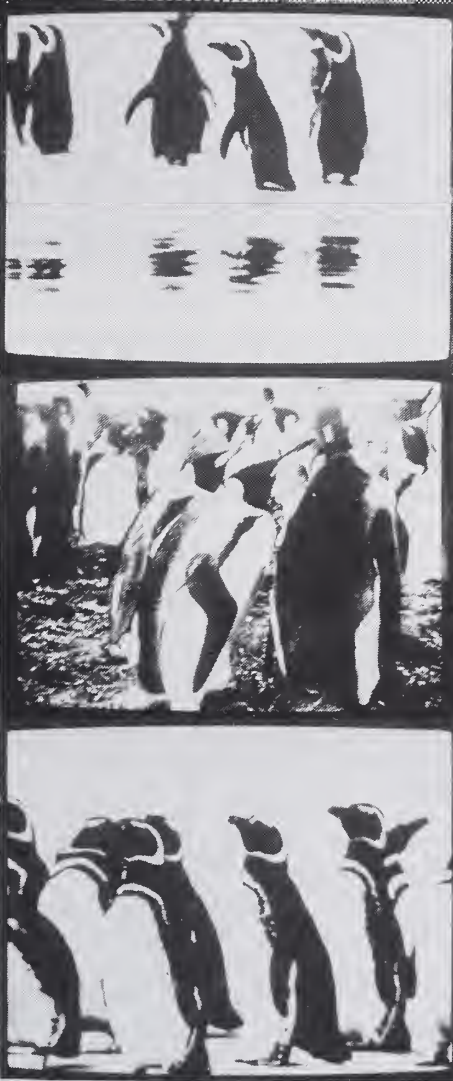
## ARTISTS CALL

### Against US Intervention in Central America:

Major screenings, exhibitions, events and performances are being planned in solidarity with the people of Central America, in conjunction with INALSE (Institute of the Arts & Letters of El Salvador in Exile.) The events are scheduled to coincide with the January 22 International Day of Solidarity with El Salvador. Artist Call will exhibit jointly with the exiled and embattled artists of Central America. To submit a film or videotape call (212) 242-3900.



# Video in the Boroughs



Tomio Sasaki's *Penguins*, a "formal" presentation by Video in the Boroughs.

## A Site For Sore Eyes

Video in the Boroughs offers  
a "movable concept" for custom-  
tailored video programs  
in unlikely places

RENEE TAJIMA

Many complain that New York City is the nation's art czardom, but they're wrong. Manhattan is. The cultural geography of the city is this: the four "outer boroughs" satellite around Manhattan's constellation of galleries, theaters, production houses, artists and producers. The residents of Staten Island, Queens, the Bronx and Brooklyn are as much at a cultural distance from the stellar island as Iowa City.

Video is no less Manhattan-centric than any other art form. And so Locus Communications, one of Manhattan's several dozen media arts centers, has translated its concern for this localized form of cultural imperialism into an innovative exhibition project called Video in the Boroughs. Now in its second year, the project brings video programming to two sites in each of New York's four outer boroughs, giving artists a chance to contact a new public.

Locus executive director Gerry Pallor works with video programmers Wendy Chambers and Liz Garfield to assemble one-hour reels of video art and documentary. Locus transports the reels with 1/2-inch VHS decks and monitors to the sites—unlikely public places such as La Guardia Airport and more traditional venues like the Bronx Museum. Most of these sites have never programmed video before; in some cases, such as the Fulton Street Shopping Mall and the Bronx Zoo, they have rarely hosted any kind of arts programming at all. Pallor points out that Video in the Boroughs is a "movable concept"—imagine video installations on Main Streets all over America. The major studios have long recognized the place for media in shopping malls (witness the rise of such made-for-mall movies as *Flashdance* and *Staying Alive*), but it may take independents to invent a better alternative.

I visited one site at the eclectic Fashion Moda gallery in the South Bronx, where graffiti great Futura 2000 had his start. (He is the subject of Dean Winkler's videotape, programmed there by Locus.) The monitor is set on a platform in front of the gallery's full-size window at an angle which offers a teasing glimpse of the on-screen action to people waiting for the bus out on the street. Although the screen tends to reflect Third Avenue's storefront skyline on top of the intended image, the monitor placement does attract passers-by into the gallery.

During my entire visit, Fashion Moda regulars Rahman Brown and Richard Paz, students at nearby Clark Junior High School,

intently watched the "From the Streets" reel with its double dutching (Skip Blumberg), rapping and breaking (Bob Harris and Rii Kan-zaki) and graffiti artistry (Dean Winkler), all aspects of South Bronx culture which have captured the imagination of growing ranks of film and videomakers. The program notes for the exhibition explained its philosophy:

"Art is usually thought to belong to museums or cultural centers. Too often these institutions become marble mausoleums celebrating the work of dead artists. While we can certainly appreciate art that survives generations, it is equally important to consider and more difficult to evaluate work that is going on all around us... We have life and art right out there on the streets. The tapes in this program capture street scenes, and by so doing, place them in a context that we may more easily recognize as artistic."

Although they expressed it differently, Brown and Paz also responded to the life, and maybe art, of the street:

"What do you like about the tapes?"

"The graffiti and the double dutch."

"Have you had a chance to see tapes like this before?"

"Yeah, on TV. *PM Magazine*, *2 on the Town* and the news."

"How did you like those TV programs?"

"They were really good."

Or, as Fashion Moda co-director Sahara Belbeaux pointed out, "Art has to start somewhere."

### STEPPING-STONE TO CABLE?

Sparking that kernel of interest is one of the project's ambitious long-range goals. Sarah Hornbacher, last year's Video in the Boroughs project director, explains: "It will serve as a 'mico-model' for future efforts to extend on-site screenings of innovative independent work past the Manhattan boundaries. Local video/cable activist Chuck Sherwood has suggested this model to the Media Alliance as a means of advocacy to establish bases in the boroughs for contact when issues of local interest cable franchising arise."

Cable's still-expected arrival in the outer boroughs is directly connected with Locus' conception of the Video in the Boroughs project. Gerry Pallor has long been involved in the cable franchising process, and wanted to strengthen Locus' impact and presence on the side of Manhattan in anticipation of cable look-



ups. As Pallor figures it, "You have to develop a taste for alternative video—and the more exposed people are to independents, the more they will demand from their local cable companies."

Pallor, Chambers and Garfield program the tapes in conjunction with local on-site coordinators. Pallor explains that "the concept is to custom-tailor the program by sites." Whereas Joan Engel and Gerald Saldo's documentary on toxic wastes in Pennsylvania (*No Immediate Danger*) may prove too involved for a harried airport crowd, Mark Lindquist's fast-moving *Subway* could provide a good between-flights diversion. Last year, a video installation was programmed at the Newhouse Gallery in Snug Harbor, Staten Island as part of the "Path of Dreams" painting show, and the Bronx Zoo show next spring will include the zoo's own animal tapes which Locus will assist in editing.

Locus personnel teaches the on-site staffs how to operate 19-inch color monitors and VHS playback decks, used because of their automatic rewind and timer capabilities. Technical problems are few, although the Locus staff is always on call to trouble-shoot. While I was interviewing Liz Garfield over the phone, Pallor was dealing in the background with a minor crisis at Fashion Moda: the equipment had lost its sound and picture. When I visited the gallery later that afternoon all was fine. I asked co-director Belbeaux if there were ever any technical problems with the show. "None," she replied with a calm smile. "Absolutely none."

The one pervasive problem affecting most of the sites has been security. Loose decks and monitors look all too appealingly portable, and the project has experienced at least one theft. Some of the sites, particularly on-the-street shows, require the presence of a Locus intern-cum-guard, who also doubles as a market analyst gauging the response of the crowd.

Videomakers I talked to were happy with both the handling of their works and the opportunity to exhibit outside Manhattan. Bob Harris pointed out that he was particularly pleased that Locus paid exhibition fees, since shows in the outer boroughs are usually "freebies."

### LOCAL IS AS LOCAL DOES

The degree of input from local coordinators varies. Joan Giummo curated the entire "Path of Dreams" show at the Newhouse Gallery, while Larry Springer of St. Anne's Church in Brooklyn said he didn't realize that he could have any input into programming. Sam Lee of the Jamaica Arts Center (JAC), located in a predominantly black section of Queens, probably best exemplifies the Locus ideal of dialogue and cooperation with on-site coordinators; yet his experience with the project also speaks to basic problems with Video in the Boroughs which Locus has begun to address.

JAC was a Video in the Boroughs site during



Redistributing the goods: Video in the Boroughs strives for community participation.

the project's first year. Lee complained that "they didn't have any software that identified with the community: no black talent, no black themes, no black producers." Locus programmed the same tapes at JAC that were shown at St. Anne's Church in the mostly white, upper-middle class Brooklyn Heights area. JAC's two directors deemed the program such a potential problem that they asked Lee to pull it. Lee, a video producer himself, saved the program by contributing two of his own pieces.

As a result of last year's fiasco Lee has worked closely with Locus in developing this year's show "From the Streets," which focuses on black themes. At first Locus programmed tapes made entirely by white producers, with the exception of Rii Kanzaki. Lee then added *In Her Lifetime*, a tape about Margaret Walker, a black poet in Queens, produced by local black producers Robert Watusi and Alan Buchanan. Said Lee, "I think there will have to be a special effort to solicit minority software if you want to build up a minority audience."

### TALENT SEARCH A MUST

In this sense Video in the Boroughs may well perpetuate the dilemma it seeks to address. The programs have included a preponderance of video artists who are well-established on the Manhattan scene, very few of whom are minority producers. Thus, Video in the Boroughs may be neglecting the most critical factor in building advocacy centers for cable arts programming. As producer Shalom Gorewitz pointed out, it will be up to the local arts centers and producers to make cable arts programming happen. Exhibition opportunities with audience and critical feedback are part and parcel of building local talent. Here the priorities of exhibitors, with their own tastes and standards of "quality," may con-

flict with local community interests of owning and operating the tools of the media.

Locus has moved positively in the direction of exhibiting local producers—a direct result of its commitment to soliciting input from the on-site coordinators. JAC's Lee sees it as a process of evolution. This year Locus began to program software that relates to his community, and he expects that next year it will increase programming of works by minority and local producers. A successful example of the symbiosis between exhibition and production which Lee hopes to achieve is Chinese Cable TV (CCTV), a group of immigrant media artists in New York's Chinatown. In its early years, CCTV's production efforts were commendable but of uneven quality. However, the group fought hard for funding and exhibition access. The result? A center for skilled, community-based producers and an increasingly cable-sophisticated Chinese immigrant community.

Locus' concept of video in public places is not entirely new. Image processing on Times Square and the Disarmament Video Survey are two other New York examples. But Video in the Boroughs could also be considered an ongoing scientific experiment using eight control sites every year. The working hypothesis: people will like video if they get a chance to see it; and a good way to reach them is to take video to popular gathering places. The variables for program and site selection: audience demography, the nature of the site, equipment requirements, the movement of the crowd, the environment, etc. The evaluation criterion: what works versus what doesn't. As Locus continues to test the video programs against each variable it may well stumble on some very useful formulas for public exhibition. ■

*Renee Tajima is former administrative director of Asian Cine-Vision and editor of Bridge Magazine. In October she joined the staff of The Independent.*



## SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

Theatrical Distribution  
in the South

*If you're interested in taking your film to theaters open to independent work in the South, the accompanying box contains addresses largely drawn from a list compiled by the Coalition of Souther Media Organizations (COSMO) directory published in 1981 (and now being updated), Susan Leonard, and other sources. See article page 16.*

## ALABAMA

Alabama Filmmakers Co-op  
433 Chicksaw Dr.  
Huntsville, AL 35801

Diane Eberly

Tampa Theatre  
PO Box 3312  
Tampa, FL 33601

## FLORIDA

Cinema Tec  
2335 Alcazar Ave.  
Coral Gables, FL 33134

The Grove Cinema  
3199 Grand Ave.  
Cocoanut Grove, FL 33133

The Manor Art Cinema  
144 NE 26th St.  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33305

Edison Theatre  
1533 Hendry  
Fort Myers, FL 33901

## GEORGIA

The Film Forum  
1514 Piedmont Ave., NE  
Atlanta, GA 30324

## IMAGE

972 Peachtree St., Suite 213  
Atlanta, GA 30309

N.I.T.E. Association of  
Independent Theater Exhibitors  
399 Pinecrest Rd., NE  
Atlanta, GA 30392

Rhodes Theater  
11 A.S. Rhode Center, NW  
Atlanta, GA 30309

The Screening Room and  
Broadview Plaza Center  
Piedmont Rd.  
Atlanta, GA 30324

Garberville Theater  
PO Box 306  
Garberville, GA 35440

## KENTUCKY

Appalshop  
Box 743  
Whitesburg, KY 41858

## LOUISIANA

Film Bufts Institute  
Loyola University  
6363 St. Charles Lane  
New Orleans, LA 70118

Prytania Theatre  
5339 Prytania St.  
New Orleans, LA 70115

## NORTH CAROLINA

Visulite Theater  
1615 Elizabeth Ave.  
Charlotte, NC 28204

Carolina Theatre  
PO Box 57  
Durham, NC 27702

Janus Theatres, Inc.  
1416 Northwood St.  
Greensboro, NC 27408

## SOUTH CAROLINA

University Student Programs  
ATT: Sue Metzger  
Room 418, Administrative Bldg.  
Medical University of SC  
171 Ashley Ave.  
Charleston, SC 29425

Nickelodeon/Columbia Film Society  
937 Main St.  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Russell House University Union  
c/o Cinematic Arts Committee  
PO Box 85141  
Columbia, SC 29208

## TENNESSEE

Clarence Brown Theatre  
Student Activities Office -305  
University of TN  
Knoxville, TN 37916

Center for Southern Folklore  
Judy Peiser  
PO Box 40105  
1216 Peabody  
Memphis, TN 38104

Memphian Theatre  
51 South Cooper  
Memphis, TN 38104

Old Daisy Theater  
329 Beale St.  
Memphis, TN 38103

Orpheum Theatre  
Memphis Development Foundation  
PO Box 387  
Memphis, TN 38103

Nashville Film Society  
2202 Oakland Ave.  
Nashville, TN 37202

## TEXAS

Greenway Three  
5 Greenway Plaza  
Houston, TX 77046

River Oaks Classic  
Repertory Theater  
2009 West Gray  
Houston, TX 77019

Rice University Media Center  
PO Box 1892  
Houston, TX 77001 (Mailing)

## VIRGINIA

Vinegar Hill Theatre  
220 West Market St.  
PO Box 642  
Charlottesville, VA 22901

Biograph Theater  
814 West Grace  
Richmond, VA 23220

Williamsburg Theatre  
Duke of Gloucester St.  
Williamsburg, VA 23185

## SUMMARY OF AIVF MINUTES

The AIVF/FIVF Boards met on 11/3/83. *Present:* Dara Birnbaum, Pearl Bowser, Matt Clarke, Yuet-Fung Ho, Peter Kinoy, Wendy Lidell, Howard Petrick, Larry Sapadin, Mary Guzy. *Temporary chair:* Peter Kinoy. No quorum present, no votes taken.

**AGENDA:** a. Disposition of platform on CPB (pertaining to the hearings in San Francisco) b. Proposed addition to board of persons representing video community.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Wendy Lidell handed out a memo on HR 4103 (the Wirth Cable Bill) and asked the Board to assist in a nationwide phone tree urging the independent community to write and call Washington regarding the proposed cable legislation. AIVF's position supports the bill in theory but feels that certain crucial amendments are necessary to make it fair and equitable.

**CPB RESOLUTION:** The resolution concerning CPB funding of independents drawn up by the Advocacy Committee for presentation at the West Coast hearings on CPB 11/10/83 was discussed. The advantages and potential pitfalls of creating a separate pool of money for independent production isolated from the CPB Program Fund staff were discussed.

Kinoy summed up the major questions to be answered in a finalized version of the resolution to be drafted in a future Advocacy Committee meeting: What insures democratic process in choosing what is representative of the independent community, and how does the community prevent an "old boy network" from developing within the proposed new structure? Will the proposed committee choose programming concepts as well as projects and insure diversity?

Sapadin stated that the main purpose of the draft resolution was to build a degree of accountability into CPB Program Fund allocation. Once the resolution is finalized, based on members' reaction at the San Francisco hearings and on mailing to members, a "two-pronged assault" will be launched to mobilize the independent community in favor of the position: 1) legislative development and 2) grass-roots organization of the membership. It was noted that the CPB statute ends July 30, 1984 and CPB will be asking Congress for more money soon so it is therefore important to begin building a political coalition for action.

A special Dec. board meeting was proposed to hammer out the finalized resolution and an explanation. Kinoy also sug-

gested a recap of the California hearings and further development of the East Coast independent position so that what happened at the NY hearings would not be repeated.

**VIDEO REPRESENTATION:** Sapadin called for a consensus on the idea that there is a weakness in the representation of video artists at the board level. Suggestions of possible appointees to the board which would remedy this problem were raised. Dara Birnbaum, Martha Rosler, Mary Lucier and Bob Harris were suggested.

Kinoy raised the issue that some current board members had become non-functional through lack of attendance at meetings. The "three absences" rule was cited. However, Matt Clarke pointed out this was a separate issue from the necessity for more board representation from videomakers, and it was agreed that biographies and further feedback from the video community would be obtained by Sapadin pending action at a future meeting. ■

*The next Board meeting will be held in January at AIVF (625 Broadway, 9th floor, NY NY 10012, 212/473-3400); call for precise date and details. Meetings are open to the public.*



## Shipshape Shipping

FIVF's new guide clears up the mystery of how to ship your films/tapes abroad—and get them back again! Examples from 6 countries show how long it takes, costs, customs requirements. The handbook also compares US Postal Service with private air freight. \$3 per copy plus \$1 postage/handling.

THE INDEPENDENT

## FESTIVALS

# Not Quite a Field Day at France's Epernay

Susan Linfield

(continued from p. 17)

creating "target films" which address the experiences of their local audiences and then screening the work widely in those communities. These three are probably the "elders" of the "regional films for regional audiences" movement in the South. Judy Peiser, director of the Center for Southern Folklore, says it will run the Old Daisy Theater on Memphis' renovated Beale Street, starting in 1984. The group, Peiser recounts, managed to get the theater from the city only by "the luck of the Irish," and plans to include screenings of independent work in its cultural programming there. The Old Daisy is the only movie theater in downtown Memphis.

Victor Nunez' dream is to create the film equivalent of the heyday of Southern short story writers during the 1950s. In traveling with *Gal Young 'Un* around Florida he learned that "people love seeing their familiar terrain—those alternative images of themselves—affirmed on film." Southern independents, the major source of those alternative images, are beginning to find ways to realize Nunez' dream. ■

(continued from p. 22)

dependents is different. It's much easier to say, 'It's not our problem.' But it is our problem." Silber agreed, "The last thing a filmmaker wants is that responsibility. But you are taking on that responsibility."

But Silber added that he believes "people do know the risk. They might not have a sophisticated view of the world. But they are very conscious of what it means to talk—not just to a camera, but to talk, period. There are lots of ears down there [Central America]. You can get killed for a lot less than talking." And Lucas recalled that the Guatemalan Indians living in Mexico, although illiterate, grasped the media's importance: "They are pretty well-informed. Every camp has one or two transistor radios. They listen to broadcasts from the Voice of America, the FMLN, Cuban, Mexican, Guatemalan stations. They compare the news from both sides. They know the situation. And they're angry."

Ultimately, then, an intelligent and protective use of sources requires political sophistication, established credibility, sharpened wits, good contacts—and great doses of luck and faith. Even then, there are no guarantees for either filmmaker or subject. Obviously, however, many people think the risk is worthwhile—and certainly not the only one they will take. Recalling a scene in his film of mourners flocking with raised fists to a mass funeral for five murdered opposition leaders, Silber said, "I wonder if Americans appreciate how many people, in that one scene, risked their lives to honor their leaders. I'd like to see that kind of courage here in supporting those people." ■

The Mostra du film d'Epernay is a new festival, held for the first time last April in the provincial town of Epernay, France. Organized by the Leo Lagrange society, a cultural offshoot of the Socialist Party, it is part of the Mitterrand government's attempt to decentralize culture from the Parisian center to the smaller cities. Epernay is, in fact, a nice little town of about 30,000 whose main industry is champagne—cheap and delicious.

The festival's motto is "la vie dans tous ses etats"—that is, "life in all its forms." Its emphasis is clearly on films dealing with social, political, and human problems, although it shuns traditional documentaries, very political films and anything "newsy" in favor of docudramas and narratives. At best, its selection could be characterized as offbeat and eclectic; at worst, unfocused and puzzling. Last year's US entries (almost all of which were screened at the 1982 IFP Market) included *The Two Worlds of Angelita* (Jane Morrison), *Out* (Eli Hollander), *Dialogue with a Woman Departed* (Leo Hurwitz), *Alexyz* (Dan Richter and Elizabeth Converse), *Mission Hill* (Robert Jones) and *Rape/Crisis* (Gary McDonald), which won the top prize. There was also a retrospective of Robert Kramer films. Emile de Antonio and Gary Crowds were among the judges.

Unfortunately, the festival had several serious problems, many due to poor organization. The "decentralization of culture" meant, in practice, extremely sparse audiences for most screenings. Very few distributors attended; this is not, in general, a place to make deals or sales. The Parisian press ignored the event for the most part (except for pieces on certain luminaries like Hurwitz). Voiceover translations into French were not arranged in advance (nor were subtitles), leaving many filmmakers to scurry frantically around on the day of their screening looking for translators. At least one film, Eric Breitbart's *Clockwork*, never made it out of customs and was lost by the festival. Discussions rarely followed screenings. And perhaps most seriously, upon arrival in France all the Americans were told that their films had been pulled from the competition; they were restored only after loud protests.

On the other hand, the festival had a friendly and informal atmosphere, and its organizers seemed to genuinely try to accommodate the needs of the visiting filmmakers. AIVF head Lawrence Sapadin, who attended the festival,

added, "It was exciting to be with a group of people from different countries who were all interested in making and seeing socially-oriented films." Gary McDonald said that, as a direct result of the festival, his film was picked up for distribution by Cinema Guild (one of the few distributors present as its head, Gary Crowds, was a juror). However, McDonald said that the festival organizers never carried through on their promise of French distribution for his film, nor even acknowledged the receipt of the dubbed cassettes he sent them at their request.

The festival pays round-trip airfare to Paris, transfers between Paris and Epernay and hotel accommodations, which are modest but pleasant. Meals are not provided, but the town is full of good restaurants. This year the festival will be held in March. Contact: Jean-Louis Manceau, Mostra du film d'Epernay, 42 rue du Cardinal Lemoine, 75005 Paris, France.

## Cannes Opener

If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere. The Cannes Film Festival will take place this year from May 11-23 and shows feature films only. Indies have been sparingly admitted to the Official Competition, but exceptions have included *David Holtzman's Diary* by Jim McBride, *Smithereens* by Susan Seidelman and *A Toute Allure* by Robert Kramer, an American expatriot living and working in Paris. The Critic's Week has been somewhat more receptive, and has given awards to both *Northern Lights* (Rob Nilsson and John Hanson) and *The Scenic Route* (Mark Rappaport) in past years.

According to the French Film Office in New York, the best way to enter Cannes is to write a letter to the section(s) you consider appropriate and carbon copy that letter to Catherine Verret at the French Film Office, 745 Fifth Avenue, NY NY 10151 (tel. 212/382-8860). Official Section director Gilles Jacob and Director's Fortnight director Pierre-Henri Deleau travel extensively seeking films. Their itineraries may be obtained by contacting the French Film Office in January or February; or if, on the basis of your letter, the festival is interested in your film, the office will contact you. The selection screenings must be arranged at the producer's expense, and you should understand that effective participation at Cannes may involve some hefty expenses like 35mm



blow-ups, travel, subtitling and promotion. Entries to the Critics' Week must be sent directly to Paris.

The selections for each section take place completely separately, but all of them except the Market require that your Cannes screening be a European premiere. There is an excellent booklet available from the French Film Office which describes the various sections of the festival. They are noted here in brief:

**The Official Section:**

In Competition—shorts and features less than 12 months old, released only in country of origin and not entered in any other festivals.

Out-of-Competition—features invited by the jury.

A Certain Look—features selected but not eligible for competition.

To enter, contact: Gilles Jacob, Director, Festival Int'l du Film, 71 rue Faubourg Saint Honore, 75008 Paris, France by Mar. 1.

**Critics' Week:**

Non-competitive section of seven films selected by members of the French Cinema Critics Association. They must be director's first or second feature, less than two years old, and not entered in any major European festival. Enter by Mar. 1. Contact: Robert Chaial or Janine Sartre, Critics' Week, 73 rue d'Anjou, 75008 Paris, France. Association member Jacqueline Lajeunesse expressed special interest in American independent features. She can be reached at 21 rue des Plantes, 75014 Paris, France.

**Director's Fortnight:**

The Association of French Film Directors presents 25 features, documentaries and animated films during the festival. Contact: Pierre-Henri Deleau, Exec. Director, Societe des Realisateurs de Films, 215 rue du Faubourg St. Honore, 75008 Paris, France.

**The Film Market:**

Run concurrently with the festival, the Market is administered separately. Your film may not have been shown at MIFED nor be over one year old. All formats can be screened inexpensively. Enter through early April. Contact: Robert Chabert, Film Market at the Official Section address above. —Wendy Lidell

## USA in Dallas Offers Drive-in Showcase

The 14th USA Film Festival will take place March 23-31, although it also presents year-round programs and events like the First National Drive-In Film Festival. Thus far, plans for the 1984 festival include a gala tribute honoring a major screen artist, a film history course and seminars on how to watch movies and the business of creativity.

The 1983 USA Film Festival was jammed with films, seminars and retrospectives. John Badham spoke at a seminar prior to screening his film *Blue Thunder*. A Best of Texas Showcase followed along with a seminar on the future of Dallas film and video, which ran concurrently with a John Cassavetes retrospective.

Cult followers were then treated to the midnight premiere of *The Big Meat Eater*. George Nierenberg's *Say Amen Somebody* played to a standing room only crowd. Lina Shanklin's *Summerspell* and Robert Jones' *Mission Hill* premiered as part of the Discovery Series. A seminar on the film critic as star preceded tribute screenings of *Oklahoma!* and the films of Anne Francis. A discussion on filming in Texas featured the makers of *Tender Mercies* and *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*. Recreating Times Past, a seminar with the directors of *Purple Haze* and *Wicked Lady*, preceded screenings of both of these films, along with Geoff Murphy's *Goodbye Pork Pie*, another Discovery Premiere. The Discovery Series also included Michael Donovan's *Siege*, David Fishelson and Zoe Zinman's *City News*, Mitchell Johnson's *Moses Pendleton Presents Moses Pendleton* and Lorenzo Destefano's *Talmage Farlow*. A special screening of new,

Will Van Overbeek



Gary McDonald's *Rape/Crisis* took the top prize at Epneray Fest.

original programming being developed by Home Box Office and a seminar on HBO and the future of pay TV paved the way for *The Terry Fox Story*, HBO's first made-for-pay-TV feature.

Pam Proctor, assistant festival director, boasts of daily attention by the *Dallas Times Herald* and *Morning News* in addition to front page coverage in Sunday arts sections and "tons" of advance publicity. The 600-seat Inwood Theater houses USA, bringing in as many as 800 people over nine days.

USA showcases Hollywood and independent films through "Premiere" and "Discovery" sections. No forms are required; interested producers should write to fest and send ¾" video or 16 or 35mm print for preview. The Best of Texas Showcase presents work produced by Texas-based companies or film/video professionals. Categories are entertainment, informational, animation, commercials and documentary; fee is \$25.

The National Short Film/Video Competition awards excellence in the creative and imaginative use of the short film and video form—fiction and non-fiction, live action or animated. Works are judged by a panel of nationally known professionals who emphasize originality in concept, style and technical execution. Like Best of Texas, work should be sent in ¾" video or 16 or 35mm film; fee is \$25. Awards for the Short Film Competition range from \$250-\$750; first place winner will be flown to Dallas for the awards presentation. In 1983, shortly after winner Bob Rogers went to Dallas to receive the award for his film *Ballet Robotique*, he jetted to Los Angeles to receive an Academy Award for his work.

Deadline: Feb. 25. Contact: Sam Grogg or Pam Proctor, 3000 Carlisle, Suite 205, Dallas TX 75204; (214) 760-8575. —Melody Pariser

## Peaches & Smithereens at Atlanta Film & Video

The Atlanta Film and Video Festival will celebrate its eighth season in April 1984. Although still young, it has grown rapidly over the years. Zoe Zinman, whose film *City News* won the \$500 WXIA Channel 11 Award for Outstanding Dramatic Film last year, gently explained that the organizers were very nice but the festival definitely needs to put a greater emphasis on publicity. Both Zinman and her partner David Fishelson were guests of the festival and were well treated, but she said that they were disappointed that their film was not reviewed.

One film with an abundance of press at the festival was Susan Seidelman's *Smithereens*, the opening night entry, which like its predecessors had a subsequent run in Atlanta. The film was introduced by *Smithereen*'s stars Susan Berman and Richard Hell; a reception was held following the film.

1983 was the inaugural year of the Chatham Valley Foundation Purchase Awards for Outstanding Southern Works at the festival. *Possum O'Possum* (Greg Killmaster), *Nellie's Playhouse* (Linda Armstrong) and *Aqui se lo halla* (Lee Sokol) split \$1000. Sokol, whose film also won the \$1000 free rental or in-kind services Lighting and Production Equipment Award for Technical Excellence, expressed her feeling that "this particular festival will continue to grow. The scope becomes broader as administrators learn more and more. It's an important southern festival searching for ideas that will bring distributors to it." She added, "I was most impressed with the festival's integrity. They make an effort to be fair and consider all different genres of filmmaking. When people say things, they get done."

Both Sokol and Zinman agreed that a major plus of the festival was the fact that Edinburgh director Jim Hickey was one of the judges, and their films were immediately accepted into the Edinburgh Festival.

Cash awards for video totaled \$2100 in 1983; film awards were \$3100. The 1984 event will



take place April 6-14; deadline is Feb. 17. Work accepted in S-8 and 16mm; video in 1/2 or 3/4" BETA or VHS. Only requirement is that films be independent. Fees range from \$10-\$35. Contact: Linda Dubler, Image Film and Video, 972 Peachtree St., Suite 213, Atlanta GA 30309, (404) 874-4756 —MP

## Festivals Down Under Melbourne & Sydney

Getting your film shown in Melbourne or Sydney, the New York and Los Angeles of the Australian film industry, means having the opportunity to present it to most of that country's film distributors and TV buyers. The majority of Australia's film professionals attend one or the other of these two major festivals in cities only 450 miles apart. Australia has a fairly well-developed non-theatrical distribution circuit based in regional film libraries, and television channel "0/28" has bought a number of American independent films in the past. So while it is not a cure-all, Australia can become a source of additional revenue for the independent trying to make ends meet.

Melbourne and Sydney share about a third of the films in their programs, and they will sometimes share the travel costs of feature filmmakers. Both festivals are reportedly very well-organized and help you meet people and do business by providing screening facilities and central meeting places.

Melbourne, which takes place in early June, has a short film competition which awards cash prizes for shorts up to 30 minutes. There are also official and information sections for documentaries up to 60 minutes and feature films in 16 and 35mm. Sydney follows Melbourne, overlapping it by about a week. It also programs shorts, documentaries and features.

Both festivals have been very receptive to American independents, and although both festival directors travel to European festivals to scout new films, they also welcome direct entries. Last year, FIVF sent a shipment of films to Australia, but due to changes in the festival administrations, this will not be repeated in 1984. Air parcel post to Australia takes about 10 days and costs about \$36 for a 10-lb. package. (For more information on overseas shipping, see FIVF's new publication *Ship-Shape Shipping*.) Contact: Rod Webb, Director, Sydney Film Festival, Box 4934 GPO, Sydney NSW 20001, Australia; tel: 660-3909; telex: AA22969. Deadline: April. To enter Melbourne, contact: Director, Melbourne Film Festival, 53 Cardigan Street, P.O. Box 357, Carlton South, Victoria 3053, Australia; tel: (03) 347-4828; telex: AA31624. Deadline: Feb. 28. —WL

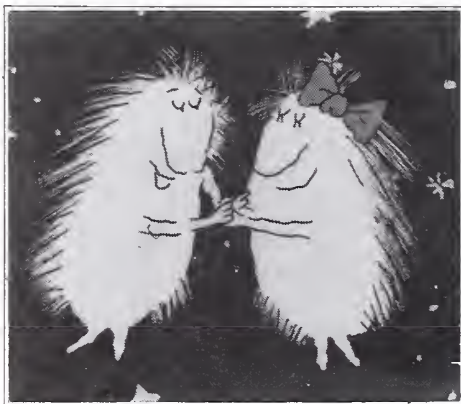
## Zagreb: The Grand Prix Of Animation Festivals

According to David Ehrlich, a US animator who attended Zagreb last year, the festival's atmosphere is "extremely warm and friendly to visitors. It's a place for filmmakers to get to-

gether and communicate." But, he noted, there was not a great emphasis on business at Zagreb.

This year, Charles Samu, HBO's director of acquisitions, will send a collective shipment of US films to the festival. He believes Zagreb is "one of the best animation festivals in the world," adding, "When someone wins, it's internationally noticed."

Winning entries in 1982 (Zagreb takes place every two years) included *Hug Me* (Sam Weiss, USA), *Opens Wednesday* (Barrie Nelson, USA), *A Hard Passage* (Dennis Pies, USA), "E" (Bretislav Pojar, Canada), *Pig Bird* (Richard Condie, Canada), *Luna Luna Luna* (Viviane Elneceve, Canada), *Way to Your Neighbor* (Nedeljko Dragic, Yugoslavia), *The Lost World* (Antti Kari and Jukka Ruojomaki, Finland), *Take It Easy* (Tamas Baksa, Hungary) and *Arena* (Zoltan Szilagyi, Romania).



Getting to know you: Zagreb has a reputation for friendliness, and Sam Weiss' *Hug Me* was a winner.

Another quality aspect of Zagreb is the constant communication between the event and interested parties through the publication of bulletins throughout the year. They also publish daily during the festival. The publication announcing 1982 winners explained why no Grand Prix was awarded: "Despite the fact that a number of excellent films were seen which had impressive qualities of either meaningful content or new forms, not one could be singled out which combined these qualities so as to merit the high distinction of a Zagreb Grand Prix. By doing this the jury wishes to encourage filmmakers to aspire to a deeper commitment to the marriage of meaningful content and new forms, and to the recognition of appropriate pacing and conciseness of expression."

Besides four programs of films in competition and three of films not in competition, there will also be these special events in 1984: retrospectives on early Russian animation, Paul Driessin's work, the work of Zoran Perisic (1978 Oscar-winner for special effects), animated erotica; and US animated commercials. A program of prize-winning films from Ottawa '82, Annecy '83 and Varna '83 will be screened, as well as promotion of new books on animation published during the two years since Zagreb '82. Several screenings of student

films are expected, as well as roundtable discussions of eroticism in animated films, violence in animated films and animation film schools.

Video-Bulletin, a closed circuit TV system which will be airing continuously throughout the festival will transmit direct festival screenings, information, teletexts, promotional spots and interviews. Animarket '84, Zagreb's animated film market, will provide on request translators, stenographer/typists, video-recorder operators and other services to enhance business talk, meetings and, hopefully, sales.

Films entered for competition should be in 16mm or 35mm; 3/4" tape for video and computer animation. Work should not exceed 30 minutes, must have been completed after July 1, 1982, and not have been awarded official jury prizes at Annecy or Varna '83. Categories: films under 5 min., films 5-12 min., films 12-30 min., educational films, films for children and first film (directorial debut). Zagreb's deadline is March 15, but the deadline to send films with Charles Samu's shipment is March 1. There is no fee: filmmaker pays transit costs to Yugoslavia. Filmmakers can get forms from Charles Samu at 1318 Fulton St., Rahway NJ 07065; (212) 484-1338. To contact Zagreb directly: 6th World Festival of Animated Films, Nova Ves 18, 4100 Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Attn: Jura Saban, Organizing Director; tel: 041/276-636, 271-355. —MP

## IN BRIEF

This month's additional festivals have been compiled by Melody Pariser and Wendy Lidell with the help of **Gadney's Guides** and **FIVF** files. **Listings do not constitute an endorsement**, and since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience with a given festival differs from our account, please let us know so that we can improve our reliability.

### Domestic

● **ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar 6-11, has for 22 years "promoted film as art." Fest director Ruth Bradley explained "the festival has longevity because we really keep it simple." She added that each year it raises about \$5000 for prizes from the community. 1983 recipient of \$1000 Tom Berman Award, presented to the most promising filmmaker, was animator Emily Hubley. 16mm only. Entry fee: \$15. Deadline: Feb 24. Contact: Ruth Bradley, PO Box 7283, Ann Arbor MI 48107; (313) 663-6494.

● **ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL**, June, showcases Asian American films and filmmakers through a non-competitive collective perspective of Asian American aesthetics and principles. After fest, films tour 8 cities, paid according to length. 16 or 35mm sought/no fee. Deadline: Feb 15. Contact: Peter Chow, Asian Cinevision, 32 East Broadway, New York NY 10002; (212) 925-8685.



● **ATHENS INT'L FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, April 20-28. Dedicated exclusively to independent production and held in a university environment, Athens is a great place to share your work with film and video lovers. Over 500 works are screened during the week-long fest, and numerous small awards of cash and equipment are presented in many categories. Films are invited in 35, 16, and Super-8 in categories of animation, documentary, experimental, short story and dramatic feature. Video should be sent in ¾" U-Matic, or ½" Beta or VHS. Categories include video art, narrative, educational, documentary and video record.

Entries surviving pre-screening are screened publicly in the town's two main movie theaters and video centers. Although daytime screenings are not very well-attended, those held in the evening are packed. Nor surprisingly, popular genres like features, comedy shorts and rock video are scheduled for those times. The awards presentation ceremonies are cablecast live on Athens City Cable and include the showing of shorter winning works.

Last year's Golden Athena winners were *Mission Hill* by Bob Jones (feature), *Rape/Crisis* by Gary McDonald (documentary feature), *Leon's Case* by Daniel Attias (short story), *Crac!* by Frederic Back (animation), *Secondary Currents* by Peter Rose (experimental), *The Big Lever* by Frances Morton (documentary), *The Last To Know* by Bonnie Friedman (educational) and *Adjust Focus* by Jennifer Kingry (Super-8). (The video festival was not held last year.) Separate juries judge each category, and judges are brought in from across the country. Written critical feedback is offered to all producers. The theme for 1984 is "Alternatives to Hollywood" and will be highlighted by workshops, panels, presentations and premieres. Entry fees range from \$15 to \$60 and entries are due by Feb. 15. Contact: Emily Calmer, Film Fest Director or David Burke, Video Fest Director, Athens Center for Film and Video, PO Box 388, Athens OH 45701; (614) 594-6888.

● **DANCE-ON-CAMERA '84**, April 23, 24, 26, 28, presents the latest in dance and mime film and video at the Donnell Library in NYC. Forms, fees and entry due by Jan 15. The deadline has been graciously extended to Feb 1 for AIVF members. Fees range from \$15-\$35 for 16mm or ¾" videocassette. Contact: Susan Berman, Dance Films Association, 241 E. 34th St, Rm 301, NY NY 10016; (212) 686-7019.

● **DANIEL WADSWORTH MEMORIAL VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Apr 20-28, seeks to interest audiences in video as a medium by installing video art in community locations. Prizes range from \$50-\$500. ¾" only. Entry fee: \$10 per tape. Deadline: Feb 1. Contact: Ruth Miller, Art Ways, Box 1313, Hartford CT 06103; (203) 525-5521/2.

● **GAVEL AWARDS**, Aug 6, attempts to foster greater public understanding of the inherent values of the American legal and judicial system. Silver gavels presented to work in ¾" videocassette (film must be converted). No fee. Deadline: Feb 1. Contact: Mary Waller or Margaret Reilly, American Bar Association, Gavel Awards Competition, 33 W. Monroe St, 7th fl, Chicago IL 60603; (212) 621-1706/1730.

● **HEALTH JOURNALISM AWARDS**, June 20-23, presents media on the subject of advancements in health care and the practice of good health habits. Five major categories—newspapers, consumer magazines, TV, radio and trade, professional or special interest publications and audiovisuals—are broken down into massive subdivisions, providing each winner with \$200 and the ACA Distinguished Journalism Award. Submit 16mm film or ¾" videocassette. No fee. Deadline: Mar 1. Contact: Public Affairs Director, Journalism Awards Committee, American Chiropractic Association, 1916 Wilson Blvd, Arlington VA 22201; (703) 276-8800.

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● **HOMETOWN USA VIDEO FESTIVAL**, July 19-21, highlights work of community access cable producers around the country in addition to local cable programmers. Winners are shown on cable stations across the country during the next 2 years and are paid royalties. ¾" only. Entry fees: staff-produced tapes: \$20; volunteer-produced tapes: \$15. Deadline: March 31. Contact: Joan Gudgel or Sue Buske, NFLCP, 906 Pennsylvania Ave SE, Washington DC 20003; (202) 544-7272.

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Maxi Cohen's *Cape May: End of the Season* won a prize at Videoshorts.

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● **HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, April. The problem with festivals that have a notoriously bad reputation is that they get more attention than they deserve due to the barrage of film-

makers, writers and organizations eager to discover and report. The Houston International Film Festival, slated for April 20-29, is apparently one of these. *The Independent* previously reported on prizes never awarded and filmmakers forced to pay to attend the awards dinner. This past year, another member wrote to complain about seminars, workshops and receptions that didn't live up to their publicity.

On the phone, festival director J. Hunter Todd sounds like a walking Emily Post manual, constantly emphasizing that "we want to run a very fair and honest festival that recognizes good film and TV and will help people in their careers." He seemed to especially like repeating the story of how a 20-year-old Steven Spielberg captured first prize for a short film entitled *Amblin'*, enabling him to make a major Hollywood connection.

1983 best feature was Wim Wenders' *Hammelt*, best documentary was Les Blank's *Burden of Dreams* and best experimental short Bob Rogers' *Ballet Robotique*, which went on to win an Academy Award. Independent films vie for cash awards of up to \$1000. Student entries receive cash grants and/or equipment. "Gold Star" presented to victors in endless categories. 16 or 35mm and ¾" video preferred; ½" or 1" is OK; S-8 transferred to tape acceptable. Entry fees range from \$3-\$50. Deadline: March 15. Contact: J. Hunter Todd, PO Box 56566, Houston TX 77256; (713) 780-8819.

● **MONITOR AWARDS**, June, stimulates excellence of creativity and craftsmanship within the videotape production industry by presenting plaques from the Videotape Production Association at a gala awards dinner. Event is a nat'l competition and has numerous categories. ¾" only. Entry fees: \$50-\$75 commercials/\$75-\$120 programming. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Janet Luhrs, Exec Director, VPA, 236 E 46 St, New York NY 10017; (212) 734-6633.

● **NORTH AMERICAN OUTDOOR ACADEMY AWARDS**, March, screens accepted films at the 1500-member North American Wildlife Conference, bringing to their attention the availability of these films. Films on any aspect of outdoor recreation, wildlife, ecology, soil or water conservation and forestry are welcome in 16mm or ¾" video, but there must be strong emphasis on the understanding and conservation of natural resources. Send \$25 entry fee to OWAA Headquarters, 3101 West Peoria Ave, Suite A207, Phoenix AZ 85029. Send film and form to James F. Keefe, Chairman, c/o Missouri Dept of Conservation, 2901 North Ten Mile Drive, PO Box 180, Jefferson City MO 65102; (314) 751-4115.

● **ROCHESTER INT'L AMATEUR FILM FESTIVAL**, May 4-5, provides an audience for non-commissioned amateur and student productions. Movies on a Shoestring trophies given to work in 8, S-8, & 16mm film or ¾" video. Entry fee: \$6.50. Deadline: March 16. Contact: Bob Rosenthal, PO Box 14360, Rochester NY 14614; (716) 724-2920.

● **SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE FILM FESTIVAL**, Mar 15-18, gives exposure to young and experimental filmmakers throughout the country. Largest student-run fest in the country boasts 1983 prize money of \$1500, including lab time for local filmmakers. S-8 and 16mm only. Entry fee: \$15. Deadline: Feb 1. Contact: Robert Gardner, 800 Chestnut St, San Francisco, CA 94133; (415) 771-7020.

● **SEATTLE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, May, gives exposure to feature films that otherwise wouldn't (continued on p. 34)



# IN & OUT OF PRODUCTION

## Mary Guzzy

With the advent of the new year *In & Out Production* steps into a new format. Each month we'll bring you more in-depth coverage of the films and tapes AIVF members are making and of how they're doing it. We hope you'll enjoy the personal touch and continue to keep us more-up-to-date on your projects. (Cheap talk and hot gossip also welcomed.)

The New York Group of Polish Filmmakers is a hub of cinematic activity with two films in production this winter. University of Cincinnati professor and director Slawomir Grunberg began filming *Off the Highway* in December. The 100-minute feature drama is the story of a gay American writer shaped by the '60's and a straight Polish photojournalist-in-exile who team up for a 10-day tour of the US on assignment for *Paris Match* magazine. From Detroit to Key West they examine the paradoxes in themselves and the people they encounter on America's backroads. The film is being shot on location and Grunberg expects to release it in April. Seed money for the project was provided by the Ohio State Arts Council. The remainder of the \$96,000 budget will come from private sources.

In November Grunberg and collaborator Tadeusz Arciuch completed photography on a 30-minute 16mm documentary about the European mime Stefan Niedzialkowski. Entitled *Beret*, the project was financed by Grunberg and Arciuch and filmed in New York City where Niedzialkowski is seeking to make a new life and career as teacher and performer. Contact the New York Polish Filmmakers at 87 Russel St., NY NY 11222, (212) 389-1077.

from royalties from Citron's previous films. The film was screened in New York at the Independent Feature Market in October 1983, and may be obtained from Iris Films, Box 5353, Berkeley CA 94705, (415) 549-3192.



Courtesy Filmmakers

Evelyn Hutchins, ambulance driver for the Spanish Republic, in *The Good Fight*.

Apparently the male half of the Chicago indie film community does not take its female members for granted. Citron remarked that male friends in the industry were impressed with the way her crew worked together and were more than willing to pitch in with a helping hand when needed in production.

## A GOOD FIGHT

*The Good Fight*, a 98-minute color documentary in 16mm by Noel Buckner, Mary Dore and Sam Sills, brings back to vivid life the era of the Spanish Civil War through the stories of 11 Americans who fought for the Republic in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

Five years before the US entered WWII, 3200 Americans voluntarily went to Spain to fight against the Fascist armies of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. With rare archival film, radio broadcasts, newsreels, period songs and recent interviews, *The Good Fight* reminds us of the deep political commitment of the era which lives on undimmed in these survivors. Co-producer Sam Sills, who worked on *The Good Fight* for six years, said the encounters with the Lincoln Brigade veterans were a life education. "Each one of their stories could be a novel. To see just how deep the commitment was in those days; not only against fascism, but in the fight for better conditions."

The producers spent three-and-a-half years researching and fundraising and two years in solid production. The Na-

tional Endowment for the Humanities funded the film and, according to Sills, "They really made us do our homework. We had to do such in-depth research that our proposal ended up being a treatise on the era."

The film, narrated by Studs Terkel, includes interviews with Alvah Bessie, Bill Bailey, Steve Nelson, nurses Ruth Davidow and Salaria Kea O'Reilly and ambulance driver Evelyn Hutchins. It will be screened March 28 at the Film Forum in New York City. A Boston screening is being scheduled for late January. The film is distributed by First Run Features, NY. NY. For more information contact the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Film Project, 161 Harvard Av., Rm. 4-C, Allston MA 02134, (617) 254-4695.

## CENTRAL AMERICA

From Skylight Pictures comes another documentary on Central America: *Nicaragua: Report From the Front* (certainly more revealing than Hollywood's *Under Fire*.) Journalists Pamela Yates and Tom Sigel travelled for weeks with both the contras and the Sandinista army, becoming the first journalists to film the "secret war." Footage of covert counterrevolutionary base camps in Honduras depict an abundance of US-supplied weaponry and the political organization of the contras, many of whom were trained in Somoza's National Guard. In contrast is their journey with the Sandinista national army and interviews with farmers and soldiers determined to defend "our revolution." US policy is explored in interviews and



Jack Levine

Sandinista soldiers defend Nicaragua from US-financed "contras" in *Nicaragua: Report from the Front*.

statements from President Reagan, Jeane Kirkpatrick and policy makers inside and outside Congress. Produced by Deborah Shaffer and Pamela Yates and directed by Deborah Shaffer and Tom Sigel, *Report From the Front* is 32 minutes, color in 16mm and available for rental or purchase from Skylight Pictures, 330 W. 42 St., 24 fl. NY NY 10036, (212) 947-5333.

The University Film and Video Association has awarded a \$1500 production grant to Lise Yasui of Temple University, Philadelphia for a 60-minute documentary film recalling the internment and relocation of a Japanese family during WWII. Yasui

Courtesy Filmmaker



Michelle Citron's *What You Take for Granted* was shot in Chicago with an all-women crew.

Women take back the workplace in Michelle Citron's *What You Take For Granted*, a docudrama about women in non-traditional occupations now in US distribution through Iris Films. Based on interviews with 100 women from a wide spectrum of ethnic and class backgrounds, *What You Take For Granted* was written and directed by Citron and includes dramatized interviews intercut with the story of a growing friendship between two women in non-traditional jobs. The film is the first feature ever shot by an all-woman crew in Chicago. It is 75 minutes, color and was produced on a \$47,000 budget, part of which came from an NEA grant and part



will use stills and home movies from her own family's archives as well as other archival footage, newspaper clippings and present-day interviews to explore a shadowed part of American history: the mass internment and relocation of Japanese Americans on the West Coast following the invasion of Pearl Harbor. Entitled *Years of Harvest*, the film is budgeted at \$50,000. For further information contact Loren D. Cocking, UFVA Membership Office, Cinema and Photography, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale IL 62901, (618) 453-2365.

Franz Walser has completed a 34-minute, 16mm black-and-white narrative entitled *White Noise*, the story of a network TV employee who discovers that the news is fabricated. Walser, a native of Switzerland, wrote and directed the piece, which stars Brian Coyle, Dona Brodie, Kricker James and Jim Doherty.

For Walser the filmmaking experience in America was perhaps as memorable as the story he captured on celluloid. "Production became a social event," he said. "In Europe everyone treats filmmaking more like a job. Here in the US it's a lifestyle." Walser can be contacted c/o Peter Lehner, 17 St. Mark's Pl., NY NY 10003, (212) 677-8760.

#### NEWS FROM AFAR

Producer Paola Franchini writes from Venezuela of an ambitious nine-hour series for television on the life and work of Simon Bolivar. The story spans the years 1817-1830, during which Simon Bolivar, travelling 20,000 miles, liberated four South American countries and founded Bolivia. *Bolivar* was shot completely in video in four countries, 20 cities and on five battlefields including such locales as Caracas, Guyana and the ruins of Sacsayhuaman. Production took six rugged months. Director of the series is native New Yorker Betty Kaplan. For more about *Bolivar*, contact Paolo Franchini at Calle C, Los Dos Caminos (Principal de los Ruices), No. 4.03.6.07, Apdo. 2739, Caracas 107 Venezuela.

Director Yan Nascimbene (*The Mediterranean*) writes from Paris that he is preparing for his second dramatic feature, entitled *Belle-Ile*, to be shot in France. He is seeking support from the government-funded National Institute for l'Audiovisuel (INA) and from the French government. Nascimbene is located at 25 Quai d'Anjou, 75004 Paris, France, and can be contacted through Camera Verde Films, 26 College Park, Davis CA 95616, (916) 758-3582.

#### FILM FOLLOW-UP

We're pleased to report that Calgero Salvo's documentary *Juan Felix Sanchez* (In/Out, April 1983) has garnered awards at the Chicago and Caracas film fests, and

#### RE: New Able Resource

FIVF's new Production Resources File is stuffed with goodies: screenplays, actors'/techies' resumes, info on post/production equipment, studios/spaces, production companies, publications, events/conferences, computers, satellites & cable. Come in & consult it, or send contributions/suggestions to the attention of Mary Guzy.

was recently named "Best Short Documentary" at Cinema du Reel in Paris... Christopher McLeod, Glenn Switkes and Randy Hayes' documentary on the Colorado Plateau energy development crisis, *The Four Corners: A National Sacrifice Area?* (In/Out, May 1983) was screened November 12 at the 2nd Native American Film & Video Festival at the Museum of Natural History in New York. The filmmakers and Hopi elder Thomas Banyacya were present for a discussion of the issues raised in the film after the screening.

#### FUTURE FILMS

We've gotten word from a couple of folks who would like to be in production and are looking for collaborators. Reginald Therrian, whose title is Pharoah of Arkashea (no kidding!), from the Monastery of Arkashea in Holly Pond, Alabama, has written a two-hour fantasy screenplay in which life and death are personified as the gods Isis and Anubis. These two impressive guys appear in a dramatization of the struggle between the two "illusions" for existence. Contact Reginald at the Monastery, Rt. #2, Box 311, Holly Pond AL 35083, (205) 706-9793... John Amato of Plainview, NY has just completed a 20-minute video pilot about the life of singer Mario Lanza. He is looking for assistance in funding and producing a full-length film or video piece about Lanza, whose brilliant opera and film career ended prematurely. Contact John at (516) 822-5437. ■

#### PHOTO CALL



To all independent video & film folk who send materials to "In & Out of Production": If you have striking b/w production stills from your project, preferably in vertical format with good contrast, send them along with the written copy to Mary Guzy, Notices Editor. Please indicate whether or not you wish the photo returned & label the still with title, director, actors, situation, return address & phone number. Let's have a full-page photo spread of recent independent work!!

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(continued from p. 31)

get a regular run. A spokesperson for the event explained that this is a "filmgoer's festival." They don't seem terribly interested in receiving unsolicited entries, but interested producers can write. No awards, no fee. 35mm preferred; 16mm OK. Deadline: Feb 29. Contact: Darryl MacDonald, Daniel Ireland, 801 East Pine, Seattle WA 98122; (206) 324-9996.

• **KENYON FILM FESTIVAL**, February, promotes individual expression, experimentation, technology and appreciation of cinema by encouraging independent filmmakers. Held at Kenyon College, fest seeks 16mm work, max 60 minutes and hands out at least \$700 in prizes. Entry fee: \$5. Deadline: February. Contact: Sam Pruitt, PO Box 17, Gambier OH 43022; (614) 427-2610.

• **THREE RIVERS ARTS FESTIVAL**, June 8-24, is calling for entries for a juried film and video competition. It will be part of a larger visual arts competition sponsored by the Carnegie Institute. Film and video artists living in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, New York or Washington DC are eligible. Entries must be in Super-8, 16mm or ¾" cassette. Optical prints only. This year's juror will be Melinda Ward of the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis. Awards totalling \$2500 will be given. \$15 entry fee. Deadline: March 17. For details and entry forms contact Donna Chase, Three Rivers Arts Festival, 4400 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh PA 15213; (412) 687-7014.

• **VIDEOSHORTS IV**, March-April, promotes the difficult-to-distribute medium of video through "an eclectic mix of artwork, short features and public service announcements." Winners are awarded \$100 and a percentage of revenues when the winning entries go on tour. Last year's winning videotapes included Maxi Cohen's *Cape May: End of the Season* and Max Almy's *Leaving the 20th Century*. Send ¾" VHS or BETA only. Entry fee: \$5. Deadline: March 15. Contact: Parker Lindner, c/o High Hopes Media, PO Box 200069, Broadway Station, Seattle WA 98102; (206) 322-9010.

### Foreign

• **ADELAIDE INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, June, showcases styles and trends of worldwide cinematic art by promoting new filmmakers and providing a non-political film meeting place. Although it's still Australia's small festival—Melbourne and Sydney figuring more prominently—Adelaide attracts 40,000 spectators. Features should be director's first, second or third work; max 60 min. for shorts, documentaries and animated films. Special awards given to features and shorts of exceptional merit. Work must be in 16, 35 or 70mm. No fee. Deadline: March. Contact: Ian Lauri, GPO Box 354, Adelaide, South Australia 50001, tel: 278-6330.

• **AUBUSSON INT'L FILM FESTIVAL ON CRAFTWORKS**, April 30-May 6, presents French audiences with films on craftwork—anything made by hand—from all over the world. Send films in 8-8, 16 or 35mm. After fest, work is screened for 2 months all over France. No entry fee. Deadline: Feb 20. Contact: Genevieve Hureau, 972 5th Ave, New York, NY 10012; (212) 570-4429. In France: Jean Lurcat Cultural and Artistic Center, Avenue des Lissiers, 23200 Aubusson, France; tel: 55 66 33 06.

• **CARTAGENA INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, June, brings together the most important films of the Ibero-Latinoamericano area, presents the best of recent Colombian production and shows outstanding work from all over the world. Statues awarded for Ibero-Latinoamericano features, Colombian shorts and

int'l features. Indies please note: only American entries in 1983 fest were *The World According to Garp*, *The Awakening*, *Honky Tonk Freeway* and *Fantasia*. Fest seems primarily interested in Latino work and Hollywood features. Deadline is April, but immediate contact strongly advised, as South American correspondence takes a lot of time. Contact: Victor Nieto, Festival Internacional de Cine, Apartado Aereo 1834, Cartagena, Colombia; tel: 42-345. Possible US contact: Christiane Roget Producciones, Post Box E, Coconut Grove, FL 33133; (305) 858-0048. Phone presently disconnected but may be hooked up soon.

• **EKOFILM INT'L FILM FESTIVAL ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS**, May, introduces new films on this subject in categories including human settlements, agricultural production, ecologization, industry or energy systems, transportation facilities, negative environmental effects, and ecologically balanced landscape development. Ekofilm grand prize plus 5 awards in each category given to work in 16 and 35mm. Entry fee: \$15/30 min.; \$24/over 30 min. Deadline: March. Contact: Libuse Novotna, Konviktska 5, 113 57 Prague 1, Czechoslovakia; tel: 26 30 32.

• **INT'L FESTIVAL OF SUPER-8 CINEMA**, March, exhibits different forms of expression in 8 and S-8 film as art. Entry fee not specified. Deadline: March. Contact: Enrique Lopez Manzano, Accion Super-8, Conde del Asalto 3, Apdo. Correos 35352, Barcelona 1, Spain; tel: (93) 317-39-74.

• **INT'L TELEVISION FESTIVAL "GOLDEN PRAGUE"**, June, is open to any public TV organization and accepts only original programs created especially for TV. Interested independents should enter through their (public) broadcaster only. Deadline: March. Contact: Dr. Gennadij Codr, Czechoslovak Television, Gorkeno nam. 29, 111 50 Praha 1, Czechoslovakia; tel: 2136, 247421.

• **MAN AND THE SEA UNDERWATER FILM FESTIVAL**, March, disseminates info on marine environment via symposia, screenings, underwater photo competitions. Send 8 or 16mm films shot underwater. No awards, no fee. Deadline: March. Contact: John Maynard, Australian Underwater Federation, PO Box 67, St Lucia, Brisbane, Queensland 4067, Australia; tel: 07-3793339.

• **SOFIA INT'L FESTIVAL OF ORGANIZATION, AUTOMATION, PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT**, May, awards golden, silver and bronze "Globes" to scientific, popular science, research, education and documentary work under 30 min. in 16 or 35mm. Deadline: March. Contact: Infor Film Servis, Bulgaria, 135 Rakovsky St, Sofia, Bulgaria.

• **TARBES-PYRENEES INT'L TOURIST FILM FESTIVAL**, June, presents media promoting tourism. Work should "stimulate in the viewer the need to go and see for him/herself what has been shown." Entered films must be in 16 or 35mm; 52 min. max. Awards presented. Entry fee: one film/1200FF, two/1500 FF, three/1700FF. Deadline: March. Contact: Etienne Achille-Fould, 2 place Ferre, 65000 Tarbes, France; tel: 93.00.78.

• **TRENTO INT'L FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAIN & EXPLORATION FILMS**, April, features 16 and 35mm documentaries that spread knowledge and appreciation of mountains or document expeditions or scientific research dealing with anthropological, ecological, physical or archeological aspects of the earth. No fee. Deadline: March. Contact: Piero Zanotto, Via Verdi 30, 38100 Trento, Italy; tel: 0461-38175.



# NOTICES

**NOTICES** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others included as space permits. Send notices to THE INDEPENDENT c/o FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New

York NY 10012. For further info, call (212) 473-3400. Deadline: 8th of second preceding month (e.g. January 8th for March). Edited by Mary Guzzu.

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● **FOR SALE:** Arri 16-S w/ synch generator, 12-120 zone, 400' mag., battery, tripod, changing bag, 2 motors, cases, many extras. \$8500 value, asking \$3200. Contact: Jim Hubbard, (212) 935-4514, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Nagra 111 synch recorder. Set up for documentary. Works w/crystal, phantom power, Sennheiser mics, flashgun slating, switchable 20 db pad & high pass filter windscreen w/Shure M63 as extra line out amp w/equalizer. Nagra case & ATN power supply. Very good condition. \$1800. Call: (212) 427-3842/874-2972, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Beaulieu 4008 ZM4 body & 75mm fl. 9 macro Switar lens. Camera in original carton w/manual & warranty, battery charger, filter key, eye cup, wrist strap & body cap. Mint condition; \$995. 16mm Bolex H-16 non-reflex turret w/25mm f2.5 Yvar; \$100. 105mm f2.5 AI Nikkor telephoto. Very good condition; \$80. 135mm f5.6 El Nikkor enlarging lens for 4x5. Mint; \$150. Contact: Bob Rosol, (412) 761-8881, PA.

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm Moviola 6-plate flatbed editing machine. \$6000. Contact: Yale University Films, 375 Orange St., New Haven Ct 06511, (203) 436-1106.

● **FOR SALE:** S-8 Optasound 2-gang motorized editing bench, Canon 514XSL camera. Perfect condition. Magnificent 9' Da-Lite screen, windowshade operation, ceiling/wall mount. Hahnel motorized cement splicer. Anamorphics. Much more. Contact: Tim Rogers, (617) 631-2361, MA.

● **FOR SALE:** 8-plate KEM editing console. 3 separate screens, 3 separate sound tracks. May be rented w/option to buy. Call (212) 563-9310, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Over 500 reels of Americana available for licensing to broadcast, cable & other markets. Roadside attractions, vistas, nostalgia, portraits, unusual events, art & architecture. More than 100 stories. Clients include PM Magazine, Ripley's Showtime and NBC Tonight Show. Also available: 50 ninety-second Video Postcards. Contact: Dana Atchley, Postcards Associates, 6208 Thornhill Dr., Oakland CA 94611.

● **FOR SALE:** Uher 100 Pilot Synch tape recorder equipped for wired or wireless synch signal w/power supply. \$800. B&H 16mm sound projector w/zoom B&H lens. \$225. 35mm Arri 11B camera w/case, synch generator & synch cable. Soft and hard front lens shades w/adjustable filter holders. Constant speed motor & cable, variable speed motor & cable, Angenieux 35-140mm zoom lens, Zeiss Sonnar 85mm f2, Zeiss Sonnar 50mm f1.5, Zeiss Sonnar 35mm f2. Schneider Xenon 28mm f2, Kinoptik 18mm f2. Angenieux Retrofocus 14.5mm f3.5. 2 Nicad batteries w/chargers, Cine 60 belt w/charger. Camera & all accessories, \$5000. 35mm Moviola w/take up arms, bulls eye picture. 4-gang 35mm synch synchronizer w/magnetic head, 35mm/16mm com-

bination synchronizer w/counters, 35mm straight & diagonal guillotine splicer, amp for synchronizer magnetic head input. All \$700. Everything mint. Call: (212) 879-0990, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Stellavox SP-7 recorder w/stereo & mono synch headblocks. 10 1/2" reel adaptor, 3 3/4, 7 1/2, 15 i.p.s. speeds. Phantom powers Sennheiser, A.K.G., Neuman mics, case & power supply. For film or music masters. Excellent condition. \$2200. Call: (212) 874-2972/427-3842, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** A.K.G. C451E condenser mic w/cardioid & shotgun heads. Shock mount pistol grip & battery power supply. Like new. \$500. Call: (212) 427-3842/874-2972, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Lowell Solo-kit; 4 omnis, 2 totas, plus all attachments. \$1100. Canon DS8 'Scoopic.' \$350. Sennheiser ME 20, 40 & 80 mics w/screens. \$350. Universal tripod w/fluid head. \$325. Contact: Steve, (415) 359-3742, CA.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony 1610 color camera w/adaptor, case. Panasonic WV-340P b&w camera. Sony KV2101 Trinitron color TV/monitor. Sony 2950 U-matic 3/4" deck. Tektronix NTSC color synch editing console w/test signal generator. Shintron 366 RS-170 special effects generator. Sony RM-400 auto editing control unit. Tektronix 528 waveform monitor. TRI EA3 editor. Siegel A video genlock processing amplifier. Miller fluid F tripod w/legs. Bell & Howell 16mm sound projector. Underwood Scriptor electric typewriter. IBM electric typewriter. Phonemate 400S telephone answering machine. Tripod triangles w/wheels. All very inexpensive. Best offer. Contact: Elliot, (212) 255-3130, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Tektronix waveform monitor, \$650. Panasonic NV9300A, \$900. JVC 4400 portable 3/4" deck, \$1200. JVC KY200, \$2400. Sharp 13" monitor receiver, \$300. Frezzolini battery belts, \$125. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 2 Panasonic b&w cameras, 2 Panasonic 1/2" decks, editing console w/Tektronix NTSC color synch & test signal generator, Shintron special effects generator, 3 Panasonic display monitors. Great for those starting out. Total package, \$600. Call: Elliot, (212) 255-3130, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Bolex H-16 camera, Wollensak 25mm 1.9 lens, Solgar 17mm wide-angle 2.7 lens, Kodak Anastigmat 2.7 102mm lens, \$300. Pan Cinor Berthiot Vario Switar 17-85mm zoom lens w/viewfinder, \$700. Bolex 16mm matte box, \$125. Bolex 16mm motor w/battery box at different speeds for hand crank box, \$60. S-8 synchronizer, \$125. Hannell S-8 splicer, \$35. Call: (212) 677-2181/924-2254, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Ikegami HL-79A, BVU-110, lights, mics, insurance, \$450/day. Radio mics, car, sun-guns, crew additional as required. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Aaton B series, 2 mags, 2 batteries & charger, 12 x 120 & 9, 5 x 57 zoom Angenieux, case,

1 complete tripod Sachtler head, long & short branches. \$18,000. Contact: Orphee Productions, (212) 678-7281, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Tripod. Sachtler fluid head, heavy-duty long legs & short legs. Call: M. Astor, (212) 678-7281, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Panasonic 3990 low-light camera, Sony Vo-4880, 4 BP-60 batteries, 5" monitor w/battery, fluid-head tripod, Sennheiser mic, lav, Smith Victor lights, cords & accessories; very portable: \$225/day w/operator. Contact: Alan/Caryn, (212) 222-3321, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Complete broadcast-quality production pkg. Includes Ikegami HL-83, 3/4" JVC 4700U, color Videotek monitor, wave-form, mics, lights & tripod. Production personnel also available. Competitive rates. Contact: Everglade Prods., (212) 925-1247, N.Y.

● **PROFESSIONAL VIDEO REPAIR, MAINTENANCE** of broadcast & industrial cameras, decks, monitors, calibration of wave-forms etc. We buy & sell used equipment. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Moviola M86 flatbed editor, flicker-free prism, low wow & flutter, quick stop circuit, torque motor box. 3 yrs. old, excellent condition. Fair price. Contact: Ron, (617) 354-6054, MA.

● **FOR SALE:** 6-plate Steenbeck; old but good, rebuilt w/additional amplifier & speaker: \$600 or best offer. Call: (212) 765-8860, NY.

## Conferences • Workshops

● **18TH ANNUAL SMPTE TV CONFERENCE:** Feb. 10-11, 1984, Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montreal. Conference theme is *Image Quality—A Time for Decisions*. One-day tutorial on digital processing of video signals sponsored by Canadian Broadcasting Corp., Bell Northern Research & INRS Telecommunications/University of Quebec will be held Feb. 9 immediately preceding conference. Contact: SPTE, 862 Scarsdale Av., Scarsdale NY 10583, (914) 472-6606. Tutorial info: Dr. Shaker Sabri, Mngr. Video Systems, Bell Northern Research, 3 Place du Commerce, Nun's Island, Quebec Canada H3E 1H6, (514) 761-5831.

## Independent Bookshelf

**Don't look any further for essential media tomes. These titles are available at AIVF:**

### How to Enter & Win Video/Audio Contests

Alan J. Gadeny  
\$8.00

### Cable TV Programming: Time to Sell or Sell Out

Gregg D. Fienberg  
Cable TV Info. Center  
\$7.50

### Frames: Statements by Independent Animators

George Griffin  
\$5.00

### Get the Money & Shoot: DRI Guide to Funding Documentary Film

Bruce Jackson  
Documentary Research Inc.  
\$15.00





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● **12th ANNUAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY RESEARCH CONFERENCE:** April 23-26, 1984, at Airlie House, Warrenton VA. Invited participants including researchers in social science, economics, law, engineering, computer science & communications discuss current and prospective research on domestic, international telecommunications & information issues. Contact: Wilhelmina Reuben Cooke, Citizens Communications Center, 600 New Jersey Av. NW, Washington DC 20001, (202) 624-8047.

● **WORKSHOPS AT GLOBAL VILLAGE:** Computer Videotape Editing assists students & professionals in principles & practices of computer-assisted editing. 20 hrs. Instruction & use of state-of-art system w/250 event memory, animation, multiple split edits & memory auto editing. Each class edits a short work. *Video in the Computer Age*, March 29-30, 1984 provides participants w/thorough knowledge of major developments in computer/video interface. Panel of communications & product development experts, electronics co. reps & historians offer comprehensive glimpse of field & discuss career & business opportunities. \$200. Also, 12-wk courses in Beginning, Advanced & Intensive Video, Electronic Editing & Documentary. \$800 average tuition plus \$300 lab fee. Credit available through New School. Registration begins Jan. 3, term begins Feb. 6. Contact: Nichole Westman, (212) 966-7526, NY.

## Editing Facilities

● **SONY TYPE V EDITING EQUIPMENT:** Excellent hourly rate if you use average 10 or more hrs. editing time per month. Contact: Michael Schwartz, (212) 925-771/966-6009, NY.

● **SELF-SERVICE EDITING:** 3/4" JVC Tape-handlers, RM-88U editor, free instruction. \$20/hr. Transfers, dubs etc. Contact: Videotrac, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **REGULAR & S-8 FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER:** Professional quality, industrial or broadcast; much better than you've seen before. Supervised or unsupervised; reasonable rates. Contact: Landy, 400 East 83 St. #4A NY NY 10028; (212) 734-1402.

● **SONY BVU 3/4" EDITING:** \$25/hr. w/editor. Contact: Kathy Abbott/Karen Ranucci, (212) 242-2320, NY.

● **TWO COMPLETE EDITING ROOMS** in Chelsea: (a) 24-hr. access: Movioloa flatbed w/ torque motor box: complete 16mm edit equipment; complete kitchen & bathroom; minimal office facilities; telephone; air conditioning. (b) 10am-6pm access: Steenbeck; complete 16mm edit equipment; ltd. kitchen, bath facilities; specialized edit equipment available at extra cost. Contact: David Loucka, Lance Bird, (212) 924-1960, NY.

● **29TH STREET VIDEO** "where the best edits cost less" offers 3/4" video editing & production svcs. Sony 5850 decks. RM440 editor, Microgen character generator, fade-to-black, audio mixer, mics, audiocassette tape recorders & more. Production svcs. include JVC KY-2000 camera, Sony 4800 deck, tripod, production mics, lights, more. Contact: Tami/David, (212) 594-7530, NY.

● **EDITING & POST-PRODUCTION FACILITIES AVAILABLE:** Shortterm rentals only. 9am-5pm business days. KEM 8-plate 16/35mm, 3/4"

video editing, sound transfer, narration recording, extensive sound effects library, interlock screening. Contact: Cinetudes Film Productions, 295 West 4 St., NY NY 10014; (212) 966-4600.

● **BRODSKY & TREADWAY S-8 & 8mm FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER MASTERS:** Scene-by-scene density & total color correction, variable speed & freeze frame, sound from any source. Artists & broadcasters like our work. By appointment only. Call: (617) 666-3372, MA.

● **STEENBECKS FOR RENT:** Moderately priced by the month. Delivered to your workspace. Repairs prompt & included. Contact: Paul, (212) 316-2913, NY.

● **LARGE COMFORTABLE EDITING ROOM** w/KEM 8-plate Universal editing table, 16mm & 35mm, rewinds, bins, splicers, synchronizers, etc. Private phone, additional office space available. Midtown location West 53 St./Broadway. Contact: Errol Morris Films, Inc. 1697 Broadway, NY NY 10019, (212) 757-7478/582-4045.

● **EDIT YOUR NEXT FILM IN ALASKA:** Studio w/flatbed & house next door. \$950/mo. Contact: PO Box 102974, Anchorage AK 99510.

● **FOCAL POINT MEDIA CENTER POST PRODUCTION:** 2 Sony 3/4" decks, edit controller & monitors w/6-in/2-out audio mixer, cassette deck, cross-pulse & waveform monitor. \$25/hr.; \$10/hr. non-commercial. ECS-90 edit controller w/2 Sony 5850 decks, Panasonic industrial VHS record/playback deck for interface w/controller, time base corrector, Sony monitors, audio & ancillary equipment. Edit VHS 1/2" original to 3/4" master. \$30/hr.; \$15/hr. non-commercial. 16mm editing bench, \$15/day; \$10/day non-commercial. S-8 bench w/built-in sound head & accessories, \$10/day; \$8/day non-commercial. Contact: FPMC, 913 East Pine, Seattle WA 98122, (206) 324-5880.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

● **NY VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY CENTER, INC.** Call for films & tapes, 5-27 min. S-8, 16mm, VHS, 3/4" for Cable TV series. Rarely seen work especially sought. Honorarium paid. Contact: Melissa Hill, NYVAC, 116 West Houston St., NY NY 10012, (212) 473-6947.

● **DISARMAMENT MEDIA NETWORK OF OREGON** soliciting audio/visual material for a series of TV programs about dangers of ongoing global weapons build-up. Send brief description or existing catalogue/synopsis. DMN will request prints or dubs for preview. All formats considered. Contact: DMN, 5111 View Point Terrace, Portland OR 97201, (503) 295-5969.

● **SUPERVIDEO:** Store specializing in documentary & educational videocassettes interested in ways of representing documentarians' films & programs. Contact: Darien Morea, (213) 394-9496, CA.

● **DISTRIBUTOR** of 16mm environmental issue films looking for new titles for developing catalogue. Contact: Umbrella Films, 60 Blake Rd., Brookline MA 02146, (617) 277-6639.

● **THE KITCHEN** seeks videotapes of all genres for exhibition & distribution. Send 3/4" copies, address, phone number & supplementary info. Contact: The Kitchen, 59 Wooster St., NY NY 10012.



● **JACKPOT**, full service releasing agency for independently produced documentary video & films, actively seeks new properties for catalogue. Will cut previews, design & print advertising releases, print copies & distribute. Quality, general appeal & commercial saleability important. Primary markets schools & libraries; also cable & PBS. Submit broadcast quality 16mm, 3/4" or 1". Contact: Janice Governale, Director Distribution/Acquisition, 2121 Wyoming St., Dayton OH 45410, (513) 252-0575.

● **FOX/LORBER ASSOCIATES**, specialists in TV marketing & distribution, expanding feature film library form representation. Interested in full-length English language films w/primarily narrative structure for sale to pay TV/cable, broadcast & home video, both domestic & foreign. Minimum length: 60 min.; no subtitles. Contact: Ericka Markman, Fox Lorber Assocs. 79 Madison Av., #601, NY NY 10016, (212) 686-6777.

● **PELICAN FILMS** seeks films/tapes for distribution to holistic health movement. We offer alternatives to traditional non-theatrical distribution. Contact: Arthur Hoyle, 3010 Santa Monica Blvd. #440, Santa Monica CA 90404, (213) 399-3753.

● **WEEKLY TV PROGRAM** on Swedish national TV seeks non-professionally produced videotapes of music, dance, stories, experiments, etc. for screening. Constructive vitality required. Some pay. All cassettes returned; mailing expenses paid. Contact: Peter R. Meyer, Swedish TV2, 105 10 Stockholm Sweden.

● **10TH ANNUAL VIDEO, TELEVISION & FILM DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL** at Global Village. Festival, one of the only American festivals devoted exclusively to documentary, will be held in May, 1984. Submission deadline: Jan. 31, 1984. All production formats accepted. Submissions must be 3/4" video or 16mm for selection & screening. Selected programs exhibited at Global Village. If possible, winners circulated in traveling show. Cash prizes & honorable mention awarded for best of festival. \$10 entry fee. Contact: Julie Pantelick, Nichole Westman, Global Village, 454 Broome St., NY NY 10013, (212) 966-7525.

## Funds • Resources

● **REPORT AVAILABLE:** From a conference of film archive cataloguers meeting at Museum of Modern Art, Feb. 1983 comes *Towards a National Computerized Database for Moving Image Materials*. Provides background history & discussion of steps necessary to create computer database on preservation information & shared archival cataloging & research. Free. Contact: Jon Gartenberg, Asst. Curator, Dept. of Film, MOMA, 11 West 53 St., NY NY 10019.

● **EMERGING MINNESOTA ARTIST NYC RESIDENCIES** at PS 1. Beginning July 1984, 2 MN artists in visual arts, film & video eligible for 1-yr. residencies. \$400 accommodation expenses & \$650 living expenses monthly administered by Institute for Art & Urban Resources/NY. Program funded by MN State Legislature, Jerome Foundation & NEA. Deadline: Feb. 1, 1984. Contact: Artists Assistance Grant Program, MN State Arts Board, 432 Summit Av., St. Paul MN 55102, 800-652-9747, (612) 297-2603.

● **VERMONT COUNCIL ON ARTS** Grants-in-Aid program accepts applications from VT resident

artists & arts organizations serving V'ers until March 1, 1984. Small grants for special projects & emergency support to non-profits offered year-round. Contact: VCCA, 136 State St., Montpelier VT 05602, (802) 828-3291.

● **NEH MEDIA PROJECTS** in TV, Radio & Film proposal deadline: January 30, 1984 for projects beginning on or before Oct. 1, 1984. Contact: NEH/Media, Mail Stop 403, 806 15th St., NW, Washington DC 20506, (202) 724-0386.

● **PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES PROGRAM** planning & construction grants administered by National Telecommunications & Information Administration. Application deadline: Jan. 16, 1984. Awards in early Aug. Applicants must be public broadcasting station, non-profit foundation, corporation, institution or association organized primarily for education or cultural purposes, state or local government, political or special-purpose subdivision of state. Contact: PTFP, US Dept. of Commerce, Rm 4625, Washington DC 20230, (202) 377-5802.

● **WESTERN STATES REGIONAL MEDIA ARTS FELLOWSHIP:** Available for proposed new non-commercial film/video works to full-time residents of Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming & Pacific Territories. Organizations & commissioned work not eligible. Applicants will control all aspects of production & have primary creative responsibility. Contact: Rocky Mt. Film Center, Hunter 102, Box 316, University of CO, Boulder CO 80309.

● **FOLKLORE MEDIA CENTER** interested in sponsoring NEA & NEH grant proposals for films about folklore & folklife. Low administrative overhead, production guidance offered. 5 films currently in production through FMC & 2 under consideration for funding 1983. Contact: Pachon Lane, Director, FMC, PO Box 866, Cerrillos NM 87010, (502) 982-6800.

● **1984-85 NYS CA PROGRAM GUIDELINES** available in early January. Contact: NYS CA, 80 Centre St., NY NY 10013, (212) 587-4967.

● **POST PRODUCTION MEDIA GRANTS** for NY State artists. Maximum \$1000. Deadline: Jan. 20, 1984. Contact: Media Bureau, c/o The Kitchen, 59 Wooster St., NY NY 10002, (212) 925-3615.

● **EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER** accepting applications from independent video artists working w/electronic image processing for 2-5 day residencies. Analog/digital image & sound processing system includes colorizers, keyers, small computer & frame buffer. Instruction & technical assistance provided. Submit resumes of production & exhibition experience, detailed project description, 3/4" tape of recent work & self-addressed stamped mailer. Deadline: Jan. 6, 1984. Contact: Sherry Miller, Asst. Dir., Experimental TV Ctr. Ltd., 180 Front St., Owego NY 13827, (607) 687-1423.

● **VIDEO SHO-TIME MOVIE CATALOG:** On-line alphabetical listing of all films available for home distribution on VHS, Beta, Laser & CED disc accessible through Compuserve Information Svc. Contact: Video Sho-Time Info. Svcs., 12704 Lamp Post Lane, Potomac MD 20854, (301) 340-2217.

● **COMING OUT WEST?** NY indies planning to shoot in northern California or Bay Area can save

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● **NEGATIVE MATCHING:** A & B rolls cut, scenes pulled for opticals etc. Color & b/w, reversal, negative stocks. Reliable service, reasonable rates. Call: (212) 786-6278, NY.

● **GOT A RIGHTS PROBLEM?** Want to use recording, film footage, obtain music license, get rights to literary work or photo? Barbara Zimmerman's service provides solutions to these problems & more. Special free initial consultation for readers who mention they saw this ad in *The Independent*. Contact: Barbara Zimmerman, 145 West 86 St., NY NY 10024; (212) 580-0615.

● **OMNIPROPS:** Specializing in design & construction of strange, unusual props and set pieces for film, video, photography. Contact: Richard Sands, 179 Grand St., Brooklyn NY 11211; (212) 387-3744.

● **PENNY WARD/VIDEO:** Documentation of dance, theatre workshops & performances. Collaboration & consultation; ex-dancer sympathetic to dancers' needs. Video for dance research projects. Video resumes of choreography for grant applications. Contact Penny Ward, (212) 228-1427, NY.

● **LEGAL SERVICES:** Experienced entertainment lawyer specializing in independent productions. Reasonable rates. Contact: Paula Schaap, (212) 777-6361 or 460-5015, NY.

## Opportunities • Gigs

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** w/ Arri 16SR, fast lenses & lights. Fluent in French, Spanish. Negotiable rates. Contact: Pedro Bonilla, (212) 662-1913, NY.

● **NEWS CREW AVAILABLE** w/ 16mm & ¾" production gear. Professional credits on request. Contact: Pacific St. Films, 630 Ninth Av., NY NY 10036, (212) 875-9722.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** for fiction, documentary. Fully equipped including Aaton 7LTR, Cooke 10.4-52, 16 or S16, Super Speed, L. T1.3. Reasonable rates. Contact: Igor Sunara, (212) 249-0416, NY.

● **PENNY WARD/VIDEO:** Rentals—Sony DXC-1800 camera, Beta I Portapak, mic & monitor w/ operator, \$150/day; same w/ VO-4800 deck, \$175/day. Transfers—½" Beta to ¾", \$10/hr. Viewing—½" Beta & ¾", \$5/hr. Editor—\$10/hr. Call: (212) 228-1427, NY.

● **VIDEOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** w/ JVC 4700 ¾" deck, JVC KY 1900 3-tube camera, full audio & Mole Richardson location lighting setups. \$300/day. Flexible for longer shoots. Also available: multi-camera studio & control room, mobile multi-camera unit, ½" & ¾" editing. "We work within your budget." Contact: Mike, ProCam Productions, (516) 379-6492.

● **SCRIPT SUPERVISOR AVAILABLE** to work on low-budget features or shorts. Contact: Mindy, (212) 636-1426, NY.

● **2-WAY ACCESS SATELLITE EVENT:** Wendy Clarke, video artist, forming small group of people to assist in developmental stages of new public video art event. Meet once per week for 6 months to "play" w/ interconnecting separate spaces in an interactive workshop exploring painting, movement, poetry, etc. Event scheduled to take place in late May in NYC. Send resume & covering letter detailing special interests. Contact: Peopletapes, 24 Horatio St., NY NY 10014.

## Coming Attractions

- *La Operacion—an interview with Ana Maria Garcia on her documentary about sterilization in Puerto Rico*
- *Alternative Interactive Video by Joan Jubela*
- *Performance/Dance into Video/Film by Daryl Chin*
- *All About Hispanic Media*

## In the next issue of THE INDEPENDENT

● **YOUNG COMPANY,** serving American-German information needs seeks writer/director/designer for audiovisual productions—technical, educational, documentary, PR, tv. At least 4-6 yrs. experience in multimedia, film & video & all around creativity requested. Individual must speak & write German. Salary is \$24,000/year. Please send resume. Contact: Elias Velonis, Heartwood Communications, Johnson Road, Washington MA 02135.

● **CAMERA ASSISTANT** w/ Aaton 7 LTR for hire. Lighting & grip package available. Contact: John, (914) 473-0633, NY.

● **RESEARCHER:** Access & familiarity w/ all NYC libraries & Library of Congress in DC. Efficient & meticulous w/ background in history, political economy & filmmaking. Rate negotiable. Contact: Danny, (212) 924-4711, NY.

● **INTERNS NEEDED:** For Telecommunications Research & Action Center, publishers of *Access*. Winter academic quarter. Open to undergraduates, graduate & law students. Academic credit available. No compensation. Work on variety of projects related to telecommunications policy, research & write articles for monthly journal, books pamphlets relating to telephone, cable, broadcast & new technologies. Contact: TRAC, Internship Program, Box 12038, Washington DC 20005.

## Publications

● **THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE MONOGRAPH SERIES:** Four volumes of essays on

cinema & television. *Cinema & Language*, edited by Stephen Heath & Patricia Mellencamp. Reports from the field of semiology. *Regarding Television: Critical Approaches*, edited by E. Ann Kaplan. New approaches to commercial TV. *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, edited by Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp, Linda Williams. Strategies resulting in production of cinematic images of women. *Cinema Histories, Cinema Practices*, edited by Patricia Mellencamp & Philip Rosen. Theory & analysis of cinema in history. \$25/ea. hardcover, \$10/ea. softcover. Contact: University Publications of America, 44 North Market St., Frederick MD 21701.

● **ON FILM:** Critical & informational quarterly film & fine arts journal from UCLA resuming publication w/ grant from UCLA College of Fine Arts & Graduate Students Assoc. 3 issues/yr. \$7.50/individuals, \$15/institutions. Contact: College of Fine Arts, UCLA, 405 Hilgard Av., LA CA 90024.

● **REDISCOVERING FRENCH FILM:** Museum of Modern Art anthology published Oct. 1, 1983 includes history of French film from beginning to 1960's by director Richard Roud. Essays by directors Jean Renoir, Abel Gance, Rene Clair & critics Andre Bazin, Dudley Andrew, Stephen Harvey. Edited by Mary Lea Bandy, director MOMA Dept. of Film. Features bibliography & filmography of over 100 filmmakers & works. \$14.95 paperback. Distributed by NY Graphic Society & Little, Brown & Co., (212) 683-0660.

● **S8 IN THE VIDEO AGE** by Bob Brodsky & Toni Treadway now available in Spanish, \$10, USA. Discounts for residents of Latin America due to grant from Ford Foundation. 2nd English edition now \$14.95 pre-paid. Contact: Brodsky & Treadway, 63 Dimick St., Somerville MA 02143.

## Trims • Glitches

● **AFFINITY FILMS,** non-profit Alaska-based media company, has received 2 grants from Alaska State Council on the Arts: to produce *Arctic Light*, film about unique & beautiful yearly lighting variations in far north; & for scripting & development of film about causes of violence in our society. Contact: Affinity Films, PO Box 2974, Anchorage AK 99510.

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to AIVF members who received NEA Visual Artists Fellowships in video. Recipients of \$15,000 are Liza Bear, NY; Maxi Cohen, NY; Shalom Gorewitz, NY; Martha Rosler, Brooklyn; \$5000 recipients are Raymond Ghirardo & Megan Roberts, Laramie WY & Deans Keppel, NY.

● **AIVF MEMBERS RECEIVE NEA MEDIA PRODUCTION AWARDS:** Wendy Clarke, NY received \$15,000 for *Video Saxophone*; Kit Fitzgerald, NY received \$15,000 for *Saints, Scholars & Schizophrenics*; Nancy Holt, NY will document her sculpture & landscaping project in Rosslyn VA w/ \$15,000 grant; Emily Hubley, NY was granted \$15,000 for animated *Man On a Plane*; Leo Hurwitz, NY received a research & development grant of \$7,500; Cynthia Mondell, Dallas received \$10,000 for children's film, *The Henderson Ave. Bug Patrol*; John Sanborn, NY will make *Quirky* w/ grant of \$15,000; Ann Schaetzel, NY received completion funds of \$15,000 for documentary, *Manhunt*; & Walter Ungerer, Montpelier VT was granted \$15,000 for an experimental film about a journey from Long Island to Montreal. Congratulations, all!



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FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

MARCH 1984

# INDEPENDENT

INTERACTIVE

VIDEO DISK



Teal Fraser

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**INDEPENDENT**

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As an independent video or filmmaker, you've decided to work "outside the system"—which means you need a community of peers even more. *The Association of Independent Video & Filmmakers* (AIVF) is such a community. As the national trade association for independent producers, AIVF represents your needs and goals to government, industry and the general public.

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INTERACTIVE

VIDEODISK

## JOAN JUBELA

*"Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" queried the videodisk. The viewer was mute. Aided by reeling waveforms of biofeedback interrogations, the high technology was only able to produce a void of information. Did it really know what it wanted? Had it no sense of ambiguity?*

*"I was just doing the dishes when the disk slipped into my home and tried to seize me. Using nothing but plain cajoling to outright intimidation all these purveyors of political and philosophical points of view try to claim a chunk of your head space under the guise of interactivity. Why should I be anything but passive?" said the viewer.*

*"For the first time, audiences are no longer limited to passive watching of television. Now they can personalize the programming. They can get involved. The term for this capability is 'interactive programming.' It opens the way for a new kind of communications: high-quality pictures and sound tailored expressly for viewers to interact with in businesses, in schools, in homes. The result is communications with a new dimension in persuasion and influence. . . ." (Pioneer Video Programming Reference Guide).*

The Department of Defense is purported to be the largest capital investor in the research of interactive videodisk technology. Since the Renaissance the practical applications of science have been directly connected to advanced warring capabilities. Galileo, Leonardo and the Wright Brothers were all at one time employed by the military. The science of aviation has given humanity the ability to drop atom bombs, hasten travel, surveil the enemy and gain a gestalten view of our environment. At present videodisk simulators, similar to arcade games, attempt to mold fighter pilots into better flyers and teach reading and writing skills to a large percentage of functionally illiterate GIs stationed in Europe.

Artists and independents, working in both film and video, are becoming increasingly attracted to the possibilities of this expensive and hardware-intensive medium. Some envision it as a totally new art form, the synthesis of film, video, print and the computer.

In an unscientific survey to assess my readership's awareness of videodisk technology and its applications, I asked one dozen independent film and videomakers between the ages of 24 and 36 what they could tell me about videodisk. Every level of sophistication was exposed. One man in his early thirties was exceedingly well-versed on the subject and could even explain that the high density tracks containing the video and audio information on a laser disk are called pits. He enthusiastically suggested collaborating on a project. A 24-year-old feminist filmmaker said she thought a videodisk was something that came into your home and asked you questions. Her description expressed an overall mistrust of technology. The middle ground of respondents, both male and female, hovered between exuberance and suspicion, but there was a tendency for women to be less interested and less informed than men about interactive videodisk and technology in general.

## VIDEODISK PRIMER

*Select one or more of the following terms most accurately describing your general perceptions of technology:*

*impelling... seductive... friendly... glamorous... exploitative... oppressive... mystical... subdued... powerful... economical... personal... impersonal... too personal.*

Design features specific to videodisk technology are inextricably related to concerns and theoretical issues that have been especially engaging to artists and writers since the beginning of the industrial age and the development of film and photography; ideas about non-linear and narrative, associative text, semiological relationships between signs and meaning, streams of consciousness, chance procedures, performance, audience participation and the political implications of distribution, to name a few.

Using the most simplistic analogy, interactive videodisk is the visual and aural equivalent of a book with all the broader implications of reading sounds, images, and text in a sequential order and time frame controlled by the

viewer. A disk could also be a pamphlet, a brochure, a training manual, a catalogue, a dictionary, a painting, point of purchase display or kinetic wallpaper. With access to the necessary hardware and software an individual can locate any frame instantaneously, retain a still image indefinitely, step through one frame after the next, and move backwards and forwards in fast and slow motion with the added benefit of multiple audio tracks. At this stage in the development of the technology, videodisk is by-and-large a play-only medium.

The highest available interactive videodisk technology is obtained in the laser optical reflective format also called Constant Angular Velocity (CAV). It uses a non-contact, low power laser to project a beam onto the disk which reflects varying signal modulations etched into the pits by a more powerful laser during the one-time recording process. In conjunction with a computer, the laser gives the viewer the capability to jump immediately from frame number one to frame number 54,000, or to any frame in-between. On both sides of the laserdisk there are a total of 108,000 frames. The other two major formats, Capitan Electronic Disk (CED) and Video High Density (VHD), use magnetic versus optical technology and employ a stylus versus a laser. They are not as inherently fast or accurate as the laser optical technology, but they do have one advantage: they are generally less expensive.

With the continual implementation of digital technologies, the storage capacity for videodisk will grow larger and larger: thicker and thicker books without any actual bulk increase in the size of this slim object resembling a phonograph record. Made of virtually indestructible acrylic, the laserdisk has permanence while continuing to possess its original picture and sound quality throughout future history. The entire collection of one million photographs from the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum is presently being produced on a 10-laserdisk set to be sold for \$300. As the medium becomes more predominant, especially in schools, it will exert a powerful influence on changing perceptions.



Videodisk technology has been actively developed for 13 years and has held a dark corner in the marketplace since 1978. At least nine different corporations manufacture hardware in the three different formats for use in two markets by consumers or industry and institutions. In 1983, 150,000 optical laserdisk players were in use versus 100,000 in 1982. 250,000 players are expected to be operating in 1984 due to the boost from the games and industrial / military markets. On the consumer level there are currently a half-million CED players in American homes. The consumer format will continue to sell, but its growth rate is expected to slow down in comparison to the laser format. A diversity of formats developed in an overly competitive marketplace has contributed to the retarded growth of this seemingly precocious medium.

Popular acceptance, entrepreneurial investment and widespread use of interactive videodisk technology will be intensified by three factors: the introduction of video arcade games last summer that use disk technology coupled with real film footage, such as Disney-style cell animation; the increasing standardization by manufacturers (all new models of laser optical reflective disk players will begin offering either 232-C or RS-422 connecting ports for interface to personal computers); and the development of the disk as a recordable medium. Listed at \$40,000, Panasonic sells a one-time record system designed for document storage. Another kind of system will be used in large-scale film and tape postproduction facilities, transferring original footage to disk in order to decrease editing time. Technical requirements and cost factors make low-end industrial and consumer use of recordable disk unprofitable at the present time.

The depth of a pit on a CAV interactive laser optical videodisk is approximately 0.1 micron. The potential for low cost, democratic access to the production and distribution of interactive videodisk by independents within at least the next five years is just about as minute. Aside from normal production costs, the added expense of producing a videodisk include mastering, computer programming development, additional time and care in postproduction, and a slew of extras. *If a personal 10-minute videotape cost me four figures to produce then the "plus figure" of videodisk puts the medium out of my reach.* John Giancola, head of the media section at the New York State Council for the Arts, foresees the mass distribution of videodisk as more complicated and limited than videocassette and film, yet he feels there is a need for artists to work in new technologies because of their humanizing impact on both product and design.

### WOULD YOU CLASSIFY THE FOLLOWING AS AN AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY?

*"I'm an avant-garde filmmaker. That's my rep in the world. I travel around and I get little*

MARCH 19





shows here and there. People know me in those circles, but you don't make a living doing this. The entire community of avant-garde filmmakers has to work at something else like teaching or doing carpentry. I work as a film editor for the commercial film industry. So I'm working on this *Omni Show* and there I am in my editing room at 1619 Broadway and this man comes around interviewing everyone from room to room. He's looking for an editor to work on his *World's Fair* videodisk project. He was interested in me because I was an artist/filmmaker. That usually doesn't help me in the least when it comes to getting a job, plus I didn't know anything about video. I was a filmmaker with a capital "F." I didn't even know what interactive video was."—Grahame Weinbrein

Working with the design firm of Ramirez and Woods, Weinbrein edited approximately 500 industrial films into an interactive videodisk format for the US Department of Energy's exhibit at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee. The informational piece attempted to explain every energy topic from mining uranium to conservation in the home. As one of the first videodisk systems accessible to a mass audience, the project has become a prototype for other systems both in the simplicity of its presentation and its technical innovations. It was the first project to incorporate live computer-generated graphics keyed onto visuals emanating from the videodisk. Words and text could be altered and superimposed over already-recorded images.

The more Weinbrein worked on the World's Fair project the more he began to draw connections between the potential of interactive videodisk technology and ideas he had been exploring in his own personal films. In collaboration with independent film and videomakers Roberta Friedman, Kim Halsey and Anthony Forma, Weinbrein is producing a narrative videodisk called *The Erl King*. The project has been awarded a combination of grants totaling \$35,000 from NYSCA and the National Endowment for the Arts. The piece is based on a poem by Goethe set to a song by Schubert about immortality, death, and the obsessive relationship between a father and a dying son. Numerous tangential elements dealing with the attractions of death will be incorporated into the piece including work by new wave percussionist ZEV, gospel music by Fourteen Karat Soul, and hundreds of associated sounds, words, and pictures stored as single frames on the disk.

The project uses a technical system very similar to the one employed at the World's Fair: three laserdisk players, an audio compact disk player, a personal computer, and touch sensitive monitors. Because of his interest in non-linear narrative Weinbrein will experiment with a technique called branching. Structurally similar to a family tree, different pathways within a story can be explored by the viewer. In *The Erl King*, by touching a portion of the screen displaying chickens, the viewer can cause the program to branch to a segment

of the disk about the life cycle of the chicken. Weinbrein is negotiating with the Sony Corporation to gain access to the necessary hardware.

At this time the piece is only being planned as a museum installation. Weinbrein sees no possibility of commercial distribution. "I used to think the work that avant-garde filmmakers did could have an influence on the perceptions of the media, but no, once that work gets incorporated into a piece being produced for commercial considerations then it has to get diffused."

### IMAGINE THIS SCENARIO

*You are preparing to drive from New York to Los Angeles because you recently met Sam Peckinpah's bodyguard in a leather bar and he liked your script, which was kind of a takeoff on Convoy, so he's given you a couple of good contacts in Hollywood. The story is about the road. It's an interactive videodisk narrative. You have the choice of traveling I-40 or Route 66. In mapping out your narrative possibilities*



*you can forge a cowpath across Kansas if you desire. And forget about Kris Kristofferson being the top bill—the viewer is behind the wheel on this one.*

Under a fellowship at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies, Peter D'Agostino is currently producing an interactive videodisk entitled *Double You (and X, Y, Z)*. The piece, motivated by the birth of his daughter, is about the acquisition of language. Its structure is built upon the physical model of light, gravity, strong and weak forces. Only the last two topics, constructed around the formation of sentences and the dispersion of songs, use an interactive mode accessible to the viewer. When D'Agostino completes the project he intends to print only a limited edition off the master disk rather than circulate *Double You* to a mass audience. D'Agostino, who teaches in the Radio, Television and Communications Department at Temple University, sees the production of his first videodisk as a personal work aimed primarily at academics, artists and students.

"New techniques emerge for use by the military or for surveillance, but if we continue to let technology develop in this way without entering into some kind of discourse we're letting only the technocrats decide how that medium develops." When hardware becomes more available and the technology becomes less complicated and less expensive, D'Agostino sees the possibility of interactive videodisk evolving into an alternate form of publication for independents.

As a commercial product, videodisk will probably expand into a new genre with digressive tendencies. "What is the idea behind the narrative disk, to have you spend more time with some kind of dumb narrative? If we say the same crap we've always been saying in five different ways, it will take five times longer to deal with the same kind of material and end up roping us into a sense of false participation." From D'Agostino's perspective, people have retained an almost McLuhanesque perception of television as participatory by its very nature, a misconception that only reinforces the selling power an interactive soap opera or video game will have on a mass cultural level, regardless of the notion of individual participation.

"The stories I read my daughter before she goes to bed become important because they're ways and models of dealing with the world, but what will happen with interactive narrative in our persuasive consumer culture for the most part is that it will become a quick-sell item. That's the danger of the disk. As long as it's a new item someone will jump on it, sell it, and go on to the next thing."

### FANTASIZE THE OUTCOME OF YOUR VIDEO DISK NARRATIVE

*Hollywood loves your Convoy spinoff, but Rewrite has suggested changing the setting from now to the future, from these planar United States to the Greater Planetary Empire. It's so much easier to pre-visualize the fantasy factor in a 3-D star field than the reality of the road, plus they have this fantastic new computer that will allow the viewer to fantasize any love object he or she desires.*

*ArtDisc* is a collaborative videodisk project between television producer, writer and performer Mitchell Kriegman, dancer/choreographer Pooh Kaye, film animator George Griffin and musician/multi-media artist Laurie Anderson. The project is being financed in part by grants totalling \$55,000 from NYSCA and the NEA with some assistance being offered in the form of donated services from within the industry. About half of the necessary budget has been raised. Hoping for a slot in the consumer market, Kriegman, the project's director, is negotiating with a commercial distributor. If those negotiations are finalized then the material on the disk would be accessible through a personal computer via an interface to the disk player. A similar system could also function as a traveling museum exhibition. Lesser degrees of interactive sophistication can be achieved in many disk



systems through a microprocessor that controls the disk player.

Whether as a museum installation or commercial product, *ArtDisc* will attempt to sidestep what Kriegman discerns as a prevalent lack of conceptual thought on the part of most industry producers and disk designers who produce software mimicking either video games or SAT tests. He has worked on both industrial disk projects and as a computer consultant for a psychological testing firm.

"If people were so interested in playing games then board games would sell like crazy. No, people played video games because it gave them something new to do with their television sets, something they've been excluded from participating in. Disks have to go beyond that simple game mentality or people will get tired of them like they got tired of video games!" Once a booming fad, the video game industry experienced heavy losses during most of 1983. Laserdisk games might invigorate the market, yet a game like the popular "Dragon's Lair" costs arcade operators around \$4,500, twice as much as most other video games.

*ArtDisc* will not be dependent on complicated branching structures. One side of a laser optical reflective disk can contain approximately 30 minutes of visual material played at normal speed. Complex branching patterns eat that time very quickly. Instead of stressing the possibilities of branching, Kriegman intends to experiment with different modes of accessing information rather than relying on stilted lists of options presented in a menu format. Palindrome effects will take full advantage of the viewer's ability to control motion.

In his own work, such as the recently completed television piece *My Neighborhood*, Kriegman employs a theatrical technique he calls "fake interactivity." He plays a character living on the Lower East Side who speaks directly to the viewer in the first person singular, attempting to remove the artifice of the television set. Even with his intended effort to confront the viewer with a responsive situation, he asserts that making interactive disks will not primarily be about interactivity, multiple choice, or putting the viewer in control, but rather about creating new structures within a work of art and finding new means for the viewer to access those structures. Hype suggesting that elaborate videodisk technology will allow people to create their own story or write their own music is a total misconception of the artistic possibilities inherent within the medium of an interactive videodisk. "You don't need Picasso to develop a paint-by-number system."

### VIDEODISK POP QUIZ

What group of artists living near the turn of the century used schoolboy pranks like overselling tickets to their performances and putting glue on theater seats to create a disruptive form of audience participation? Step frame backwards for correct answer. STSIRUTUF NAILATI EHT.

Video artist Barbara Buckner has worked with electronically processed imagery since 1972. From the man-on-the-street point of view she perceives her work as "idiosyncratic," an abstract language even the museum-goer has difficulty grasping unless it is blatantly incorporated into a narrative structure. Her work, nearly all of it silent, is meditative and ethereal with a sense of translucence, color and form like painting. With a \$6,500 Services to the Field Grant from the NEA to conduct research into developing technologies, Buckner began in 1982 to investigate



interactive videodisk. In her first interactive project, *Analogs*, Buckner designed a kind of videodisk model utilizing two VHS decks and a Commodore 64 computer. As she describes it, different images are simultaneously seen on two monitors. Questions appearing in the form of a text on a computer display prompt the viewer to make choices concerning the relationships between the two sets of images. Through this selective process, codes and signs of depicted objects develop metaphors of meaning; a salt shaker can become snow on a window pane. Buckner intends creativity to become a conscious instead of a subconscious process. For this transformation to take place the viewer must manipulate the motion controls on the deck (play, fast forward, etc.) taking the tapes to the desired locations. By isolating the act of perception, the user's response completes the work. "I think what people have a problem with in this medium is that it reminds them of being in school."

While ideas about interactivity associated with videodisk will alter the passive relationship between the viewer and screen, the material presented on a disk will still be informed by the creative personality: writers, designers, producers and programmers. "It's a different experience writing *Moby Dick* than reading it," said Buckner, emphasizing that there's a lot of water to tread in the marketplace before videodisk becomes a democratic technology like Kodak instamatics.

Like Weinbren, D'Agostino and Kriegman,

Buckner is interested in the non-linear quality of laserdisk. In a dream her metaphor for the possibilities of interactive videodisk were crystallized in an image she describes as "frozen music architecture." She is currently researching material for her first interactive videodisk narrative to be called *Flight to Venus*. Within her interpretation of narrative, humans are not the only ones in the universe to cause things to happen; any interaction of forces can tell a story and every noun is a potential verb. *Flight to Venus* will attempt to transport the user through four universal worlds to reach the realm of Venus. Along the way Buckner would like the viewer to identify with plants.

Because of high cost factors related to videodisk production, Buckner expects to look toward "other sources" outside granting institutions to support this as well as future projects. Due to the lack of available software in the videodisk/game industry, the time might be right to seek financing from commercial sources. The predominance of the "I shoot you, you're out of my way" brand of video game is a result of a limited target audience aimed primarily at adolescent boys. Buckner perceives a female market that game producers have been unable to exploit because little or no energy has been invested to determine what games girls would want to play. Like Ms. Pac Man in some respects, *Flight to Venus* might appeal to a more feminine sensibility by employing different methods to circumvent obstacles within the game that are non-militaristic, something enveloping rather than destructing.

Buckner is not unaware of the "1,000 potential points of compromise" her work might be subjected to in a commercial venue. "It's a hard line to straddle," she said, adding that at 33 she is beginning to realize the difficulties of making a living while still continuing to produce her own work.

### PARTICIPATION TV

In 1963 at a gallery in Wuppertal, West Germany, what artist exhibited the first video game—called "Participation TV"? Via a microphone, the voice of the viewer was re-amplified in order to manipulate the raster scan patterns seen on a television set. Step frame backwards for the correct answer. KIAP ENUJ MAN.

Special Thanks: Peter Crown and Jennifer Scanlin, Romulus Productions; Sheldon Renan; Siggraph, New York; David Geshwind; Nina Fonoroff; Ann-Sargent Wooster; and Stan Davis.

Material for this article was taken from numerous trade publications, newspapers, market studies, history books, and Walter Benjamin's article "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, (Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968).

Graphics by Teal Fraser.

Joan Jubela is a video artist and freelance writer who has contributed to *Heresies*.



## MEDIA CLIPS

# Uptown Any Night: Selling To a Cable Stand-Alone

DEBRA GOLDMAN

While the ever-dwindling number of cable programming services continues to move away from the risks of special interest programming toward the security of the mass market, a few pockets of localism remain within the industry. One such surviving phenomenon is the "stand-alone," a cablebiz term for a pay service programmed by an operator and marketed within a single system. Since cable operators' profits depend on earnings from pay, rather than basic services, a stand-alone can potentially provide a little revenue boost to the operator. At the same time it presents the operator with the challenge to respond, if not to the needs of the community, then at least to its specific consumer preferences.

Uptown, Group W Cable's stand-alone in New York, bills itself as "Manhattan's Moviechannel." Offered exclusively to 86,000 cable subscribers living on the upper half of Manhattan, it steers clear of both the Hollywood blockbusters and the no-name B-movies which characterize its giant cousins, HBO and Showtime. Instead, the channel aims for what program manager Joshua Caplan calls "a New York flavor," which in practice translates into a schedule lifted straight from the tradition of the art house circuit. For well over a year, Uptown has been offering its subscribers subtitled

European films, directors festivals, a women's film festival and even a "Tribute to the New York Film Festival" festival. It now claims 18,000 subscribers who pay \$6.95 per month to receive the service.

An increasingly important element in the Uptown mix is independent film. Over the past year works such as *Chan Is Missing*, *Girlfriends* and *The Atomic Cafe* have been featured on Uptown. Last November, indies received their most prominent exposure yet when the channel premiered its first Independent Filmmakers festival. Predictably, Uptown's choices leaned towards well-known works. Three of the festival films, *Eating Raoul*, *Lianna* and *Smithereens*, had already earned name recognition through their theatrical releases. The fourth, *On the Nickel*, was self-financed, produced and directed by actor Ralph Waite, familiar to tube watchers from years on "The Waltons."

It remains unlikely that, even in Manhattan, Uptown will ever risk showing any but the most highly visible independent films. However, the service is convinced that independents contribute to the "sophisticated filmgoers" ambience Group W is trying to create, and the staff is actively looking for new independent product. In a recent effort to increase visibility

## AMERICAS IN TRANSITION

The Committee of Latin American Filmmakers, which has been in the process of defining its objectives in response to the ever-growing activities of Latin American cineastes, now publishes a magazine. *Boletín de Cine* covers distribution, festivals, nuts-and-bolts tips, addresses, essays in aesthetics, etc. It's available free at the AIVF office (625 Broadway, 9th floor, NY NY 10012). To subscribe send \$5 (US) to Editado por Zafra. AC, Leonardo da Vinci No 82, Mixcoatl CP 03910, Mexico DF.

Last December *The Independent* and Jorge Sanchez, one of the *Boletín* editors met at the Havana Film Festival and concluded an exchange agreement between the magazines. So watch for translation of *Boletín* articles in upcoming *Independents*, and don't be surprised if you see something familiar appear in Spanish in *Boletín*!

to indie distributors, Uptown placed a first-time ad in the 1983 Independent Feature Project program. The service has already lined up its second independent festival, scheduled this month, which features *Say Amen*, *Somebody*, *Rosie the Riveter*, *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop*, *Gal Young 'Un* and *Not a Pretty Picture*.

Caplan declined to be specific about how much Uptown pays for rights, claiming that each film is negotiated separately and that Uptown's fluctuating subscriber count figures into the formula. However, some filmmakers reported receiving between \$1,500 to \$2,500 for a feature, not a bad price given the low sums common in the industry and Uptown's so-far small subscribership. A typical contract gives Uptown non-exclusive rights from six months to a year, during which time the film is given eight to 10 showings. In its premiere month on the service a new film is likely to be seen four or five times at various hours of the week.

Uptown did not always have such "film buff" appeal. The service was originally created in 1978 by Teleprompter, which then (along with Manhattan Cable) owned one of Manhattan's two franchises. Manhattan Cable clearly possessed the richer share, claiming all of the island south of 86th Street on the east side and south of 72nd Street on the west. By comparison, Teleprompter's franchise had half the subscriber base, and its area consisted largely of middle and lower-income multi-ethnic neighborhoods that led northward to black and Spanish Harlem. For these customers, Uptown packaged a mix that included Kung Fu flicks, action movies and soft-core adult entertainment.

In May, 1982, Group W acquired the upper Manhattan franchise from Teleprompter. The multi-system operator was supportive of Uptown (it also owns Z Channel, another stand alone in Santa Monica, California), but the new vice president of programming, Janet Foster, wanted changes. For the franchise Group W bought was not the same one Teleprompter had claimed more than a decade earlier. In the ensuing years, upper Manhattan, and in particular the Upper West Side, had become the place increasing numbers of "young professionals" called home. A pre-



Uptown Saturday night: *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop* airs on Uptown cable this month.



dictable scenario of gentrification unfolded: skyrocketing rents, neighborhood cleaners transformed into chic ethnic restaurants, and corner candy stores reincarnated as upscale ice cream emporiums. On Broadway, an established porn theater closed its doors to be reborn as a revival house complete with art deco ambiance. Group W applied the same marketing logic to Uptown. As Caplan explained, "The neighborhood was changing. The people were now more educated and had higher incomes." Bruce Lee was out, Liv Ullmann was in, and John Sayles was soon to follow.

Uptown is betting on a proposition that independents have long asserted: There is an audience for independent film. By itself, the service is hardly the answer to the hopes independents once held for cable. But the stand-alone does represent a small vindication of the beleaguered narrowcasting concept. We can hope that the service's future subscriber count will prove both Uptown and independents to be right.

### ***In the Name of the People Fin-Syn Fray Fizzles***

So you can't get on primetime television? Well, whatever chance you have will grow even slimmer if the networks have their way. For the past year, the Big Three have been lobbying hard to take the Financial Interest and Syndication Rules (FISR) off the books at the FCC. The rules, created in 1970, sought to curb the networks' control over programming by forbidding them to own any financial interest in their primetime fare or to retain any syndication rights in the first-run series they broadcast.

If the FISR has not resulted in a vast array of diverse programs, it at least has succeeded in redistributing some of the power in the television industry. Since it went into effect, Hollywood "independents" have put their mark on American primetime. Independent TV stations, with greater access to programming, have managed to chip away at network viewership. While the effects of the FISR have not trickled down very far, the rules remain an important government policy statement on the need for diverse programming sources and are an indispensable prerequisite to any independent involvement in the otherwise strictly closed world of broadcast television.

Under the prodding of the networks, the FCC first began to reexamine the FISR under Carter's administration. A preliminary report submitted by the Network Inquiry Special Staff to the FCC in June 1980 concluded that the rules "have not led to more diverse programming types on the networks or in syndication, nor have they done anything to increase the number of viewing options available to the public at any given time." It is only by a dizzying leap of logic, however, that one might conclude that since the solution has failed, it is best to reinstate the original problem. Yet this has been the approach of the FCC under chair-

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man Mark Fowler, a leading ideological warrior of the Reaganite free market.

Fowler's well-known deregulatory fervor was synched up with the networks' argument that FISR blunted their competitive edge. It was they, the Big Three declared, who truly had the public interest at heart. Crying that new technologies (for which most of America is still waiting) threatened the future of "free TV," Croydon B. Dunham, executive vice president and general counsel of NBC, has tried to convince the public that the rules would "continue to limit diversity" and "continue restraints against the development of small independent producers, including minority producers."

Yet what sounded like common sense to Fowler's ear seemed like newspeak to independent producers and television stations. "Networks like to talk about the little guy, like a pet," Richard Reisberg, president of MGM/UA Television, told *Variety*. But if the rules were repealed, he warned, "this little guy will get the same chance he had pre-1970, which was none." Although it stretches the imagination to conceive of MGM/UA as a "little guy," the fin-syn debate has created a proverbial "strange bedfellows" coalition. Big guns from Hollywood such as the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), MTM Enterprises and independent TV station owner organizations have joined with public interest lobbyists. Leading the public interest arm of the anti-repeal forces is the Committee Against Network Monopoly (CANM), whose members include AIVF, Media Access Project, Hispanic Telecommunications Network, National Association of Black-Owned Broadcasters and the Communications Commission

of the National Council of Churches. Their efforts in Congress led to the introduction of sister legislation in the Senate and House to prohibit repeal of the FISR for a five-year period.

In August, the undaunted FCC announced a "tentative decision" to repeal the rules, retaining certain limitations on network interests until 1992. Ironically, enforcing these proposed limitations would tax the regulatory agency to a greater extent than the present rules. Congress responded in late fall by placing a six-month moratorium on any final FCC action. The telling blow, however, was dealt by the Great Free Marketeer himself. Harking back to his Hollywood roots, President Reagan informed Congress that he supported a legislatively-backed mandated moratorium on repeal. A wounded Fowler put on a brave face, promising Congress that the FCC would take no action until mid-1984. In the meantime, the networks, rebuffed by both Congress and the White House, agreed to sit down with the anti-repeal forces to create a settlement. But while the industry-linked Committee for Prudent Deregulation is sitting in on the meetings, CANM is not.

It's doubtful that these interested parties have locked themselves in a room to discuss the public interest. MPAA president and ranking anti-repeal legislator Jack Valenti has promised "to consult with consumer groups, public interest organizations, guilds and individual independent producers" before agreeing on any compromise. But his report to Senator Barry Goldwater on an early round of talks indicates that money was the single subject of discussion. By this time, the compromise may already have issued from the back room. If

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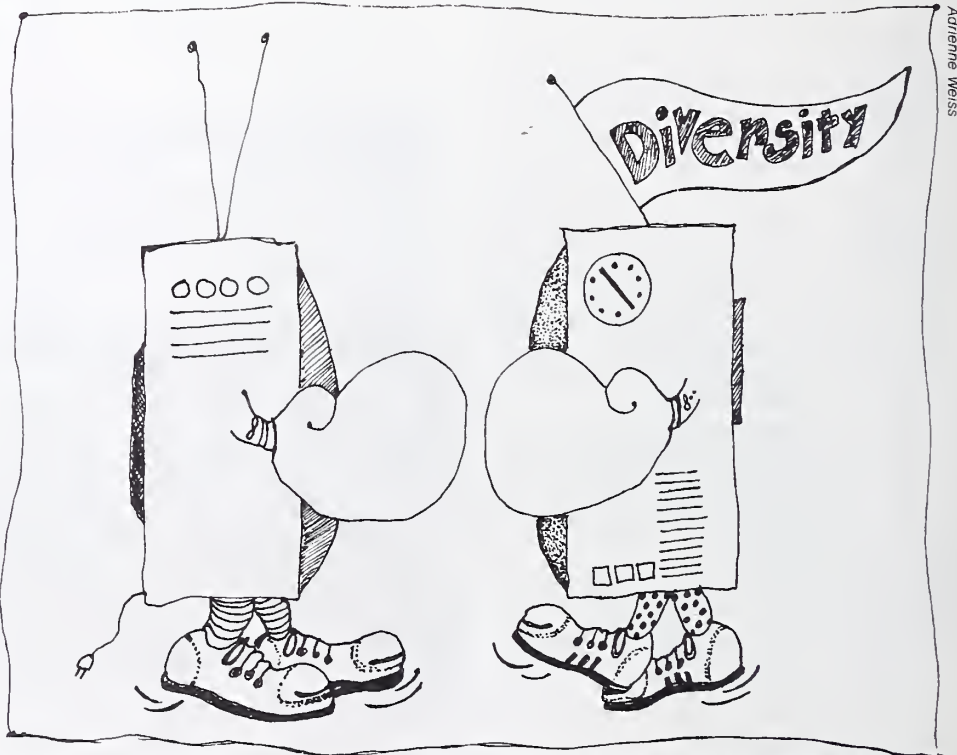
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not, Congress will once again tackle the question and the CANM lobbying effort will return to high gear. The prospects for a legislative victory are good.

Throughout this debate, "diversity" has been a key buzzword, with all parties claiming to be its friend. But it would be naive to imagine that diversity, as alternative filmmakers understand it, will necessarily result from retention of the FISR. At the same time, it's certain that without the rules, such diversity will be almost impossible. —DG

## EZTV Offers Off-Off Video in an LA Mall

I've always been big on the idea that one's own community is often the source and influence for one's work. And this proposition may be just as true in Hollywood as in East Harlem. What other explanation could there be for a Los Angeles gallery show of indie video fare headlined by tapes like *Blonde Death* and *Faculty Wives*? It's the Hollywood indie community which has spawned EZTV, its own video theater and production facility.



## VIDEO GALLERY

EZTV is a place where videomakers refer to their tapes as movies. Where dreams and projects come true after all the majors have let you down. EZTV is, as former "La Mama"-ite Phoebe Wray says, "off-off networks."

Soft-spoken founder and director John Dorr opened the gallery in June 1983 in a tiny split-level room on the second floor of a West Hollywood shopping mall. He calls it "the box." I'd say it more closely resembles an oversized loft bed.

"When we first opened, no one had any idea of what this space was. The idea of showing video in theatrical situations was unheard of," explained Dorr. Fortunately the press has been good to the gallery. During its nine-month lifetime it has already been featured in *Variety*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Los Angeles Weekly* and *American Film*, among others. As a result EZTV has been able to attract enough of an audience to keep alive four night screenings per week—quite a feat in the city of 70mm Dolby.

Production and post-production activities followed, taking advantage of the two 26" color monitors and ¾" videocassette decks

already being used for the screenings. The gallery's ¾" and ½" color portapak and lights are owned by EZTV or donated by its members, who include locals from the Hollywood area with motivations similar to Dorr's own. "My background is as a frustrated person who'd like to make Hollywood movies," explained Dorr, "and with video you can make it rather cheaply. There are quite a few people around [EZTV] like that. All of the original people here have traditional film backgrounds."

As a result, the program menu includes a preponderance of feature-length narratives such as Dorr's *Dorothy and Alan at Norma Place*, based on the life of Dorothy Parker; a teleplay entitled *Last Quarter Moon*, taped at Los Angeles' MET Theater; and James Dillinger's infamous *Blonde Death*, featuring Tammy the Teenage Timebomb's rampage through Orange County.

Beth van der Water, who coproduced *Dreamland Court* with EZTV and the Long Beach Museum of Art Video Annex, agreed that the shadow of the industry is very much a part of the Southland indie milieu. "The people that I work with right now are all professionals. They're quite happy to get away from the inundating realms of filmmaking—like SAG contracts. Most of them work within the industry, but they want to work on something they really believe in." For instance, *Good Grief*, an indie tape by Susan Rogers shown at EZTV, featured actress Lois Chiles of "Dallas."

Yet not all of the videomakers associated with EZTV are Hollywood-inspired or aspiring. Phoebe Wray, who first learned video at EZTV, explained, "I'm trying to see what video can do that film can't." She uses video as an electronic "intruder or eavesdropper." The gallery's programming includes an eclectic mix of experimental, video art and documentary tapes as well as a sci-fi talk show hosted by radio personality Mike Hodel. Dorr also does not preclude showing film dubbed to tape.

EZTV operates as a semi-cooperative, with each of the approximately 25 members paying a \$50 fee for access to the equipment. Non-members pay a low \$15 per hour for use of the post-production facilities.

Indie video venues in Los Angeles are rare commodities, and videomakers indicated that they are willing to contribute their works for screening because of the exposure afforded to both the press and public. Among the few other indie screening facilities mentioned to me were Club Lahsa, LACE, the Space Gallery and the Long Beach Museum of Art, undoubtedly the premiere video facility in

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Southern California. Non-broadcast video is new to Los Angeles, and cracking its audience may be one of Hollywood's last entertainment frontiers. Super-8 and video producer Ken Camp remarked on the uneven attendance at EZTV screenings: "I have a horrible feeling that people don't go because they don't want to go across town to watch TV. I don't go out myself. I watch everything at home."

Dorr is moving towards distribution as a supplementary outlet for tapes screened and produced at EZTV. But he also remains optimistic about the gallery's potential draw, and

has instituted such enticements as "midnight outrages," play-of-the-month tapes and "art world happenings." When EZTV opened last June, its New Orleans Square mall location was a "virtual ghost town." The mall has since turned around, with more foot and car traffic and the establishment of several new video-related businesses. Dorr even hopes to open a screening room at the 14-screen Cineplex in nearby Beverly Center someday. Who knows? After all, this is Hollywood. (EZTV is located at 8543 Santa Monica Blvd., #11, West Hollywood, CA 90069.) —Renee Tajima ■

**WEST INDIES****Building a Voice:  
Lobbying Group Forms**

FENTON JOHNSON

*"West Indies" is an occasional column devoted to news & issues from the West Coast. Send your press releases & suggestions to Fenton Johnson, Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco CA 94103; (415) 552-8760.*

With 1978 Telecommunications Act reauthorization hearings scheduled this spring, a coalition of West Coast media organizations and individuals is moving to lobby for independent producers' concerns. The coalition includes representatives from the four largest media organizations in the Bay Area, with a combined membership of over 3,700. For the first time, Film Arts Foundation, Bay Area Video Coalition, Video Free America and Media Alliance have joined forces to pursue collective goals. AIVF helped catalyze the West Coast lobbying coalition by co-sponsoring public TV hearings in San Francisco last fall.

In its first and most significant action so far, the coalition engineered a mailing to its own members and the members of Washington state's Focal Point, Oregon's Media Project, southern California's Independent Feature Project and the western states members of AIVF. The mailing presented a nine-point platform, and included a sample letter to members of Congress asking that they support the platform at the spring hearings.

Though coalition members used the AIVF position paper already presented to CPB as a starting point, there are differences worth noting. The coalition declined to advocate the Center for Independent Television called for in the AIVF platform on the grounds that it would add another layer of bureaucracy whose responsiveness would be difficult to enforce. Instead, the West Coasters call for direct funding—insulated from station and consortia—of

indies. The coalition also advocates the establishment of regular consultative structures among indies, CPB and PBS, with an eye to improving public television's dismal record on carriage and publicity for indie programs.

Depending on which coalition member you're talking to, the mailing's objective varies from "education" to "confrontation." The first of these goals raises few enough hackles. In a town where politics rate among the fine arts, San Francisco's indies have been a notoriously quiescent crowd. "There may be a time for confrontation, but I'm much more interested in a clear, reasoned approach," said Skip Sweeney, co-director of Video Free America and a coalition member. Sweeney worries that if indies make too much noise, they may risk losing outright the financial gains they made through the 1978 legislation.

In contrast, coalition member Larry Daressa, president of California Newsreel, advocates a much more activist line, contending that the mailing itself was a gesture of confrontation. But, Daressa concedes, "Most of the coalition members have been uninvolved. They've not seen themselves as functioning politically regarding CPB and PBS."

If Sweeney and Daressa represent the coalition's extremes, Bay Area Video Coalition director Morrie Warshawski is the voice of its center. Warshawski identified education as the mailing's principle goal, noting that on the West Coast it's difficult keep current with activity 3,000 miles away.

Still, Warshawski spoke out strongly in favor of direct action now. "What's wrong with making a little noise? All of us support CPB—that's the first plank of the platform. Now's the time for us to let CPB and Congress know we have a large voice and constituency and can make things happen."



"Ideally, we'd like a first-time meeting among representatives of independents, CPB, PBS and the National Association of Public Television Stations (NAPTS) prior to the hearings, so we can work with them to present a unified front to Congress," said Julie Mackaman, co-director of Film Arts Foundation. "Barring that, we can only step up efforts to appeal directly to Congress."

Coalition and AIVF Board member Richard Schmiechen, who works both in New York and San Francisco, underlined the importance of a unified West Coast voice in public broadcasting. "From the first, AIVF has made advocacy a priority," he said. "Here I know individuals who have been doing advocacy for years, but no institution focuses on it."

Schmiechen recalled that when Lewis Freedman headed the CPB Program Fund, "He had a tendency to say to AIVF, 'You only represent a narrow constituency,' when in fact all producers were upset. . . CPB and Program Fund need constant oversight. The presence of a West Coast group can only help in that."

Like the outcome of the Telecommunications Act hearings, the coalition's future is uncertain. Mackaman emphasized its current ad hoc status. "It simply grew out of an urgent need for independents not to sleep through the reauthorization hearings," she said. But building a coalition around one issue may be the first step to a much larger strategy for Bay Area advocacy. Responding to questions about the coalition's future, Mackaman held up a \$10 check, the coalition's first donation. "We're on our way."

For information on the Western Coalition for an Independent Voice in Public Broadcasting, contact the Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760. To make a contribution, make your check payable to Film Arts Foundation/Western Coalition. ■

*Fenton Johnson is a freelance media writer and the media coordinator of the Film Arts Foundation, a service organization for West Coast film and videomakers.*

## IN FOCUS

# Tape-to-Film Is Far Along but Has Far to Go

DAVID LEITNER

At last October's American Independent Feature Film Market in New York, word got around that Rob Nilsson's *Signal 7* was shot and edited in ¾" video, then transferred to 35mm. Attending the screening were as many filmmakers as buyers, suggesting that other producers had been thinking about low-budget, high-quality tape-to-film. Afterwards, many marvelled at how far along tape-to-film had come—others at how far it had to go.

The story of the production of *Signal 7* is enlightening, if atypical. Producing a 35mm feature was not his original goal, says Nilsson, who's perhaps best known as co-director (with John Hanson) of the classic independent feature *Northern Lights*. Two-and-a-half years on the road in search of investment for *On the Edge*, a 35mm feature Nilsson directed and is presently cutting, had imparted "a need to reassert the fact that we were artists and not just fundraisers." With no cash on hand for raw stock or processing, Nilsson seized upon an opportunity to experiment with taping.

Realizing he couldn't afford to shoot his original feature-length script, Nilsson instead excerpted an evening in the life of the main characters. Marty and Speed, a pair of middle-aged San Francisco cab drivers, ply the lanes at night while letting slip their shared dream of making it big as actors. The eight excerpted

scenes, which provide the framework for improvisation, include a decertification vote at the cab driver's union hall, a desperate audition for a part in *Waiting for Lefty*, and the robbery-murder of a fellow cabbie.

Since the original script was written for them, the actors playing Marty and Speed had locked down their characters. The supporting actors, who played additional cabbies and fares, were auditioned with an inexpensive Tricon camera and a small Betamax SL-2000 deck. Reflecting Nilsson's background in improvisational theater, they were encouraged to write long character descriptions on their own. Taped rehearsals followed which were intended to "create prehistories for all the characters in relationship to each other" and "find the way a scene would work before actually shooting it."

### BETAMAX SKETCH PAD

The Betamax taping proved "a real helpful sketch pad." (Maybe Coppola was onto something?) Although there wasn't an attempt to write down precise lines, every scene was rehearsed and developed. Nilsson cites jazz, which "has a form and structure, but then there's a solo," as a model.

Abandoning as unworkable his initial whim to tape a continuous feature-length take (there

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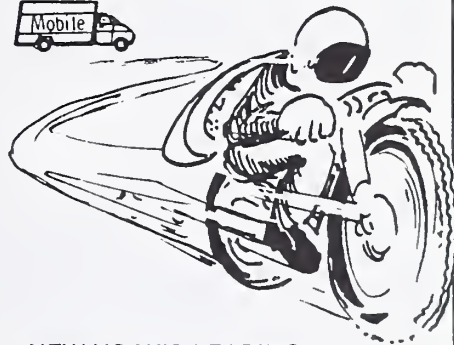
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wasn't a long enough  $\frac{3}{4}$ " cassette anyway), Nilsson scheduled four nights of taping, later adding two more. A hand-held, two-camera technique was chosen: one camera on the main action, the other for such coverage as cutaways and reaction shots. As luck would have it, Nilsson discovered the San Francisco Production Group, a start-up video facilities house that, intrigued with the *Signal 7* project, agreed to share costs and equipment. As a result, they offered two superb Ikegami HL-79 DAL low-light cameras and portable Sony BVU recording decks.

With minor exceptions, Nilsson used available light. The fluorescent interiors of the DeSoto Cab Company driver's room and garage were sometimes "augmented" with additional fluorescents for overall level, and 12 v. floods powered by car battery were mounted outside a cab's windshield for front-seat fill. The resulting images were unusually dark for video, with much shadow detail disappearing into the pedestal. A decision was nevertheless made to forgo the camera's gain (diminished signal-to-noise ratio; for example, a +6 db increase in gain resembles a 1 stop push in film) and avoid the consequent amplification of noise. The shallow depth of field obtained using the Fujinon zooms at their wide aperture of f/1.7 and the predominance of close-ups established *Signal 7*'s decidedly low-key, intimate yet veiled look.

The audio was miked conventionally, and the signal was split and sent to an audio track of each BVU-110. (The other audio track recorded time code.) A remote monitor for each camera was on hand, as well as an intercom to each camera operator. "I had a lot of control if I wanted it," recalled Nilsson, "but I wanted everyone to be improvising, including the camera people and certainly the sound guy." With tape rolling continuously for each camera, a cutting ratio of 22:1 resulted. (A far cry from that single take!)

## VIDEO EDIT

Editing was accomplished off-line by dubbing the original  $\frac{3}{4}$ " onto a second  $\frac{3}{4}$ " with video time code visibly displayed in a little "window" on the frame. This could then be edited on any  $\frac{3}{4}$ " machine. When the edit was complete, the editor, pencil in hand, copied a list of edit points using the time code designations. This decision list determined the assembly of the original  $\frac{3}{4}$ " as it was conformed on line to a Type C 1" master at the San Francisco Production Group's facility.

With no previous video editing experience, Nilsson found  $\frac{3}{4}$ " editing "quite interesting and exciting." One major frustration, however, was the tendency for  $\frac{3}{4}$ " image quality to deteriorate every time a further dub was required to accomplish a cut. "For us, after five or six dubs, it was almost unwatchable. It would sometimes break up so badly we'd have to use a special-time base corrector to get an image that wouldn't roll over."

After the edit was complete, dialogue was re-recorded onto a 24-track tape, utilizing time-

code capabilities. Nilsson decided to go whole-hog with the mix, since "you have marginal sound to begin with if you're recording on  $\frac{3}{4}$ " video." ("Something we wouldn't do again," he notes. "I would do it double-system on a Nagra with time code.") Additional tracks were completed, and the audio was eventually mixed to an interlocked 35mm print.

## ELECTRONIC BEAM RECORDING TRANSFER

What most impressed (or dismayed) the cognoscenti gathered at the IFP was the visual quality of the 35mm print. A very sophisticated method of transferring the electronic signal to film, Electron Beam Recording, was employed by Image Transform of North Hollywood, California. EBR is much more than a kinescope process, whose basic configuration, a 16mm aimed point-blank into a monitor, hasn't changed much since the pre-video tape days of live television. With EBR, the electron beam that would ordinarily scan the phosphors of the monitor strikes the 16mm film directly, writing an image on each unexposed frame.

Actually, the single microscopic electron beam can't directly impart color to film. Instead, the red, green and blue components of each film frame are recorded sequentially on three frames of Kodak 7360, a little-used black-and-white "autopositive," similar to microfilm, with ten times the resolving power of 7291. The real-time 7360 recording takes place continuously in a vacuum chamber at  $3 \times 24$ , or 72 frames/second. Upon developing, an optical printer pin-registers and superimposes each triad of positive images through a sequence of red, green and blue narrow-band dichroic filters to expose a composite color frame of 7291 or, in Nilsson's case, 5247 (the reverse of the old Technicolor three-strip process).

The color/contrast possibilities of this electronic and photographic combination are enormous. The red, green, blue, cyan, magenta and yellow levels of the video signal are independently adjustable before the transfer, and conventional film timing is available afterwards. Don Nikkinen, production supervisor at Image Transform, points out that "in film you can make it lighter or darker, change a color here or there, but it affects everything else. In video, you can adjust black levels and leave white levels alone." As an exercise in low-light recording—on  $\frac{3}{4}$ " nonetheless—*Signal 7* leaned heavily on the potential of electronic scene-to-scene color correction and black level manipulation.

## SCAN BAN SOLUTION

The Image Transform process is particularly notable for its abolition of scan lines. Each scan line is increased in thickness until it seamlessly meets the neighboring line, top and bottom. Increasing the diameter of the electron beam's spot would undermine horizontal resolution, so instead the horizontally scan-

ning pin-point of electron is "wobbled" up and down in a tight sawtooth pattern. This high-frequency wobble has the appearance of stretching the scan line in the vertical direction only, filling the unsightly gap. Because this technique is part of an overall signal processing that relies on a four-frame averaging of data—four successive frames at a time are stored and analysed for areas of common detail so that sophisticated noise reduction can eliminate spurious discrepancies—scan lines are sometimes momentarily visible at junctures of sudden movement, such as scene cuts.

There's a limit to the miracles Image Transform can perform: tape-to-film is still tape-to-film. Richard Claghorn, the former manager of Image Transform's lab whom Nilsson admiringly credits for his inspired moral and technical support during the *Signal 7* transfer, says: "Let's say you took a good 1" C-format videotape and did the very best recording—you've got a really high-quality, broadcast videotape—what you have when you've finished that project is about as much resolution as you've got on Super-8 film." Anyone who's examined one of Bob Brodsky's S-8 video transfers or Rune Ericson's S-8-to-35mm blow-ups would be empirically inclined to agree.

While the particulars of the *Signal 7* experiment are intriguing, the original question persists: Is tape-to-film a viable production alternative in the real world of commercial distribution? Certain financial considerations say yes. The upfront money needed to bankroll the film production can be sidestepped, and that can change a red light to green. *Signal 7* otherwise "would never have been done, because from the git-go we never had any kind of cash in the bank," argues Nilsson. And while the budget ultimately weighed in at \$150,000 plus deferrals, this included Image Transform's transfer/blow-up bill for \$20,000, slightly below the average cost of a conventional 16mm-to-35mm feature blow-up.

From the standpoint of technical considerations, the answer is not so clear. Many at the IFP screening, including myself, felt that the image was often blurry and murky to the point of distraction. Perhaps a transfer from original 1", such as Sony's fabulous new EFP-quality  $\frac{1}{2}$ " Betacam format, which is far superior to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " would fare better. In fact, that's exactly how Richard Pryor's recent concert film *Here and Now* was produced. Taped in 1", it was transferred by Image Transform to 35mm for mass release. Although the results often looked soft, only one major critic cited the subpar "camerawork" in print.

Indeed, concert tape-to-films—from the 1964 *T.A.M.I. Show* to the 1981 *Monty Python Live at the Hollywood Bowl*, taped in Image Vision—have posted a reasonably good track record, presumably because the audience is less critical toward the visuals. Serious dramatic ventures such as Michelangelo Antonioni's 1979 *Mystery of Oberwald* and Emile de Antonio's 1982 *In the King of Prussia* have failed to obtain conventional distribution.



While other factors were involved in each of these examples, it's clear that compromised image quality lengthens the odds against securing serious attention from distributors. A decision to plan a tape-to-film project at this point should be weighed carefully, for it would be a

Pyrrhic victory to successfully pull off a low-budget video production only to be later denied access to theater audiences on account of perceived technical inadequacy. ■

*David Leitner is an independent producer who works at Du Art Film Labs in NY.*

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## SUMMARY OF AIVF MINUTES

*The AIVF and FIVE Boards of Directors met on January 5, 1984. Full minutes are available on request. A summary of the minutes follows:*

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Lawrence Sapadin reviewed the process by which AIVF's public television position paper draft was developed: advocacy committee meetings following last March's heated membership meeting; circulation of an option paper to the media arts center community at the AFI/CPB documentary conference last April (10th-12th) and in *The Independent* (June 1983); public meetings this fall in New York and San Francisco (see "West Indies," this issue).

Sapadin also reported that he and other AIVF members had begun to meet with Congressional staff from the House Telecommunications Subcommittee to discuss the draft proposal. He also initiated informal discussions with CPB staff about a possible negotiating session between CPB and representatives of the independent producer community to head off a confrontation on Capitol Hill.

West Coast board member Howard Petrick reported that the meeting in San Francisco on independents and public TV resulted in the formation of a West Coast coalition which has drafted its own platform. The position paper, which tracks much of the AIVF proposal, has been sent to over 2,300 people. West Coasters are beginning to meet with their local legislators to press their demands.

**PTV RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED**—After some tinkering with the language proposing the establishment of a

Center for Independent TV Production, and the addition of an EEO clause, the AIVF Board formally approved the AIVF PTV recommendations.

### VIDEO REPRESENTATION BEEFED UP

In recognition of underrepresentation of the video art community on the FIVE board, the Board voted to seat Martha Rosler, Dara Birnbaum (currently an alternate) and Mary Lucier.

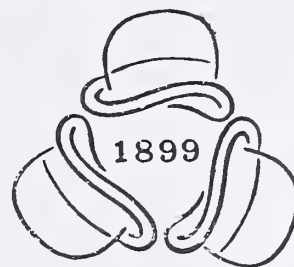
**DUES INCREASE AUTHORIZED**—Due to increased costs and a slower increase in paid memberships currently, the AIVF Board authorized a dues increase to \$35 for regular members and \$20 for students. Management will hold off the increase for as long as possible, but no later than July 1, 1984, the beginning of the next fiscal year. Last dues increase was in early 1980.

**SILKSCREEN CONTROVERSY**—Board Member Loni Ding reported that, although PBS had cleared *Silkscreen* (a series of Asian American-produced programs packaged by the National Asian American Telecommunications Assoc.) for airing, WNET (New York) threatened to pull the first two shows because of disapproval of updates that had been added to them by NAATA. AIVF agreed to participate in a press conference protesting WNET's interference and to join in other plans for supporting NAATA.

The next meeting is scheduled for 7 pm, March 8, 1984 at AIVF (625 Broadway, 9th floor, NY NY 10012). Call to confirm: (212) 473-3400. Meetings are open to the public. ■

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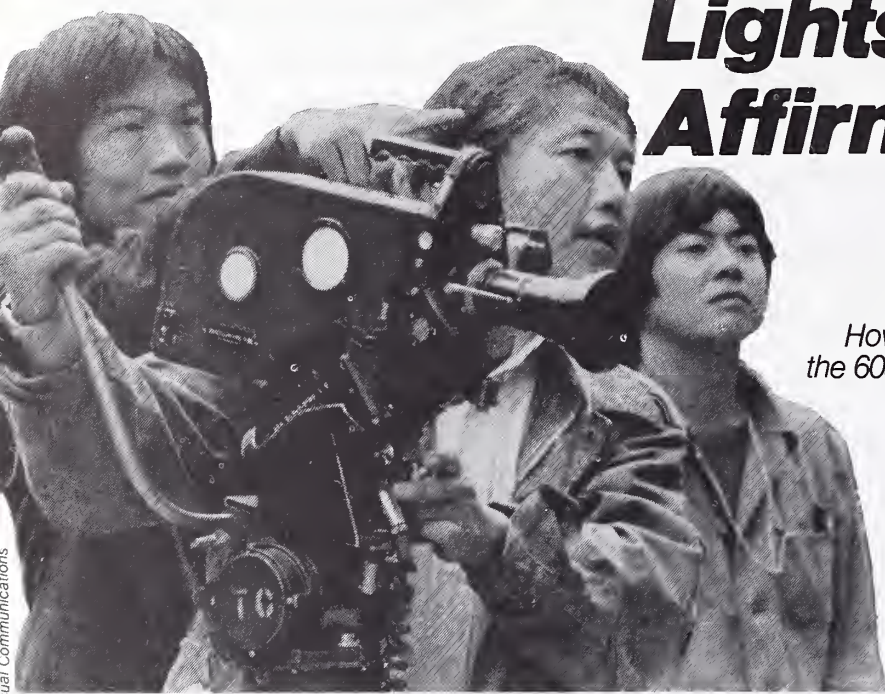
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# Lights, Camera ... Affirmative Action

Filmmakers aren't born, they're made.  
How the UCLA Ethno-Communications program of  
the 60s changed the color of independent filmmaking.

RENEE TAJIMA



It is ironic that Hollywood has of late become enamored with the portrayal of 60's rebels now grown up—as if to prove the industry mill can swallow any social convulsion and spit it out pasteurized. But the media itself was not shielded from the times, as Third World and progressive peoples demanded—and won—not only a presence within it but a redefinition of its form and content.

The Ethno-Communications program, which began in 1968 at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), was one catalyst to that movement. As an affirmative action program Ethno-Communications opened the door to Asian American, Black, Chicano and Native American students in significant numbers for the first time. As a film training program it went far beyond the traditions of form-conscious but conscience-less preparation for the industry.

"The Ethno-Communications students were trying to find leaders in their community—like political leaders, or Chicano artists—and make films about them," explained Sylvia Morales, who is currently the executive director of the Latino Program Consortium and the producer of *Los Lobos: A Time to Dance*. In her first year at UCLA prior to the Ethno Program, Morales was the only Chicana in the entire film department and, she recalls, "The non-color students were involved with films concerning relationships, personal films. But for us there was a sense of urgency, so we set aside our desire to make personal films in order to make ones which reflected our communities."

These students were not alone in their chal-

lenge to the status quo. The independent film movement was beginning to take shape at the time, and many Ethno alumni went on to join its ranks. The films produced since, with a strong commitment to the visual articulation of their people's history, have their moorings in the spirit which infused the Ethno program.

Prominent among the Ethno graduates are Asian American and Chicano independent producers who have remained in the Los Angeles area, home to both the nation's largest Asian and Chicano communities and the movie industry. The way in which the Ethno-Communications program changed the color of independent filmmaking, the success of its graduates and their ongoing work within their own communities are all an antidote to present-day attacks on affirmative action programs.

## BEFORE ETHNO

1968 at the UCLA film department: Francis Ford Coppola had just completed his MFA. There were two Chicanos in the graduate and undergraduate programs combined with a handful of other minority students. If the media industry was a bastion of the status quo, then film schools trained its palace guard. In 1968, film studies at UCLA was as it had always been.

Elsewhere on campus and across the country, minority students were organizing with demands for affirmative action and ethnic studies and agitating against the Vietnam war. At UCLA, Campbell Hall was transformed into the left-American equivalent of the Harvard Center for International Affairs, housing Afro-American, Asian American, Chicano and Indian studies. And in that same year the new political realities hit the film school full gale.

Moctezuma Esparza is the executive producer of *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, a three-hour indie feature about a legendary Mexican hero. In 1968 Esparza was a history student and organizer active in the founding of UCLA's Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MECHA). He was asked by Elyseo Taylor, the only Black (and only minority) professor on the faculty of the film department, to join the newly-formed Media Urban Crisis Committee (MUCC). With a dozen other minority students as well as sympathetic faculty such as white profesor John Young, the MUCC group, dubbed the "Mother Muccers," was organized.

The original 13 Muccers staged sit-ins and protests to successfully agitate for affirmative action in the film department, resulting in the formation of the pilot program for Ethno-Communications which established the program's basic structure. According to Esparza, the curriculum was modeled after the department's existing course of instruction. Each student produced a short S-8 and 16mm film, followed by a thesis film. Some additional workshops or seminars were established in Third World aesthetics and community-related issues. But the singularity of Ethno's curriculum lay in the types of films produced which, in turn, reflected the program's philosophy.

"Ethno-Communications gave them [Black students] a sense of purpose because the film department lacked structure," explained Black filmmaker Charles Burnett (*My Brother's Wedding*, *Killer of Sheep*) who was a teaching assistant in the program. "Ethno-Communications had a definite purpose—to demystify filmmaking and get it out to the Black community, to get stories about Black people on film."

Above photo: Ethno grads Eddie Wong & Robert Nakamura shoot a Visual Communications film in Los Angeles, 1972.



The essentially political orientation of the Ethno program was evident in the film *Requiem 29*, a major production of the pilot group (along with teaching assistant David Garcia). The 31-minute film documents the anti-war Chicano Moratorium of August 29, 1970 in East Los Angeles, and the subsequent inquest which implicated Los Angeles police in the shooting of reporter Ruben Salazar.

### MOTHER MUCCERS GO FORTH AND MULTIPLY

As Native American filmmaker Sandy Osawa recalls the heady times, "You could really feel the presence of minorities on campus; I became aware of minority and media issues." Osawa quit her job to join the Ethno program. She now runs Upstream Productions, an independent video and graphic arts company with her husband Yasu, another Ethno graduate.

The original 13 students made films together and agitated together. One of their key victories was pushing an admissions quota policy through the student-faculty senate. According to Esparza, who was appointed to the body, the new policy mandated that 25% of all entrants to the undergraduate and graduate film programs should be from minority groups. Said Burnett of the affirmative action policy, "I thought it was absolutely necessary to set up a quota system because no one [at UCLA] took the responsibility of getting minorities into the program. To be quite honest, no one gave a damn." Burnett had been one of four Black Americans in the film program for the two years prior to Ethno-Communications. The "Mother Muccers" became active in recruiting succeeding classes, beginning with the 1970 entrants who constituted the first full Ethno program.

### THE MOVEMENT IS THE MESSAGE

Ethno students were recruited from within UCLA and other area colleges, as well as from local communities. The recruitment and involvement of Asian American students is a history in itself. Asian Americans in the original 13 group—such as Betty Chen, Danny Kwan and Brian Maeda, all of whom continued in filmmaking—cooperated with the UCLA Asian American Studies Center to find candidates from within the Asian American community. Recruits were found in interconnected movement organizations such as the anti-war community newspaper *Gidra*, the Asian American Student Alliance, and the "community college" which had been established during the summer of 1969 by future Ethno student Robert Nakamura, now a professor in the film department, and several other community professionals. Classmates Duane Kubo, Steven Tatsukawa and Eddie Wong would later join Nakamura to form the nucleus of Visual Communications, an Asian American production cooperative.

The Ethno program became the training ground for extending the movement work and

social concerns of its students. Tatsukawa remembers a special production class which was put together to "hit the road for a few weeks in California" to study location work. The Black Panthers in San Francisco, agricultural workers in the central California Loc region, Chicano Studies at Berkeley, and the Bay Area Native American Center were subjects of the workshop projects. Tatsukawa



Larry Clark's *Passing Through*, an early Ethno-Communications film, was acclaimed in Moscow.

says, "These visits stimulated films. The Loc footage became a Visual Communications film on Asian American farmworkers in the Delta entitled *Pieces of a Dream*."

Like *Requiem 29*, which won a Bronze Medal at the Atlanta International Film Festival, several early and significant Third World films came out of the program. Black filmmaker Larry Clark's *Passing Through* won the Grand Prize at the Moscow International Film Festival. Nakamura's *Manzanar* and Wong's *Wong Sinsang* were widely distributed as Visual Communications' initial film repertoire. Nakamura recalls, "One of the most memorable things is Project 1, your first complete film on Super-8. After we completed it we put together a show, 'View from the Third World,' with about 50 short films. The Chicanos did things on the riots in the 60's, the Asian Americans did the [internment] camps—it's one of the best programs I've ever attended of Third World films. They were rough but they had a lot of guts."

Ethno films generated a mixed reception from white faculty and students. "Luis Ruiz did a real nice film that angered the whole faculty," Nakamura remembers. "It started out in English but after the two kids went into the house the rest of it was in Spanish."

Because of their close working bonds the Ethno students often had little contact with either white students or affluent foreign-born Third World students. "I think the [American-born] Third World students in Ethno hung out together, and for the most part were not included in the overall film program," explained Kubo. "During screenings at the end of the quarter I remember pitched battles between Third World and white students over content,

impact of the film, the way it was shot—almost everything. There were even a few fist fights in the middle of screenings."

But according to Morales, "It was those times. Everyone took a hard line—people were intolerant. All of the films were always attacked." Morales encountered contradictions within Ethno itself. "I found sexism in my own group," she recalls. Years later, when she returned to UCLA as a graduate student, she produced *Chicana*, a widely distributed and unprecedented film about the history of Mexican American women.

### THE END OF ETHNO

Despite the fire of its first years, by 1973 Ethno began to fade. "It became a bad environment," according to Burnett. "No one in the University really wanted it. With Elyseo Taylor it was just like the Jesse Jackson thing in Syria: everyone hoped it would fail." The thread of disapproval remained throughout the program's lifetime, and it never received the concrete support necessary to make it last.

Nakamura remembers that there was a lot of criticism, the beginning of the anti-affirmative action backlash which eventually hit many such programs. "There was a certain amount of resentment on the part of other elements in the film department because some academic waivers were permitted [to Ethno students] and the university-wide Graduate Advancement program provided financial aid to minorities."

Unlike some other affirmative action projects, UCLA offered Ethno-Communications no special resources, with the exception of the commitment of faculty time and additional equipment access. Nakamura remembers more significant support as coming from Third World study centers in Campbell Hall. "We'd be able to get work study or graduate research assistantships through the centers to pay for school. Otherwise UCLA didn't put any money out; the program was just a big recruiting effort."

But Ethno-Communications was something more than that. It was a direct challenge to the status quo and traditions of the industry's concept of film training. According to Kubo, "David Garcia and other advisors to Ethno were constantly under fire from the rest of the faculty to produce competent filmmakers, as opposed to political activists."

Along with the lack of university support, internal problems and the increasingly conservative political climate were cited as contributing factors in Ethno's demise. John Rier (*Black Images from the Screen, There's a Mural I Know*), a Black filmmaker who entered the film department on the last leg of the program, echoes the sentiment of Ethno alumni that the students, too, had changed. "We had people who came in as individuals—students who came there to make it in Hollywood, unaware that there had been a struggle and a battle to even have Third World students [in the UCLA film program]."

As the Ethno program dissipated, a Third



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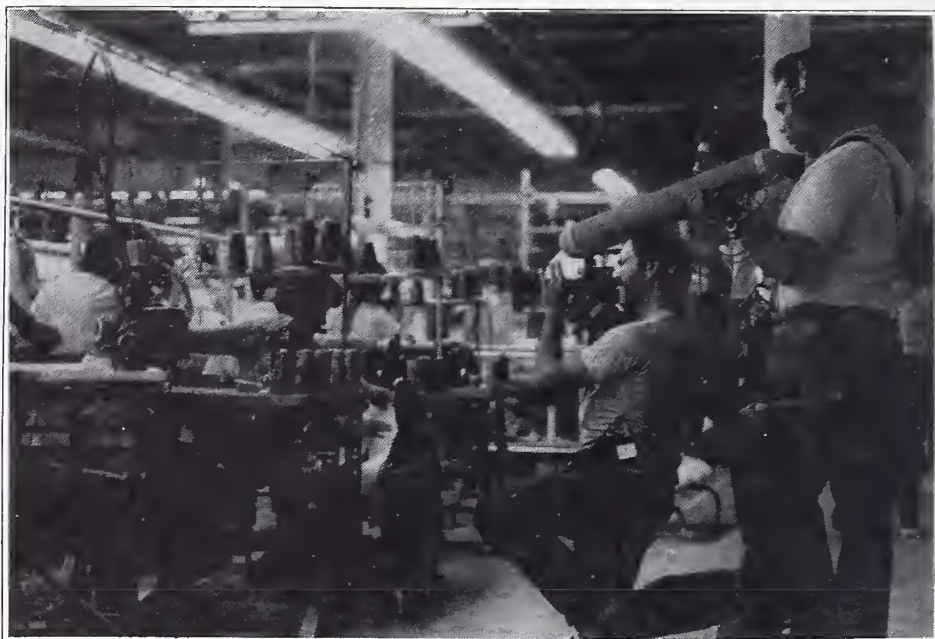
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Courtesy of Interamerican Productions, "Neighbor" Project

Ethno's Chicano grads, among them Jose Luis Ruiz (with camera), went on to form their own production company.

World Film Students Organization was formed to lobby for maintaining Third World admissions and programs. A Chicano Cinema Coalition was also established, involving UCLA film students with Chicanos in the industry. But, according to Ruiz, that formation eventually petered out because post-Ethno students "didn't have to struggle like Ethno-Communications students did. So they didn't appreciate the struggle of Ethno-Communications."

### THE ETHNO IMPACT

Since Ethno, the presence of Third World students in the film department has never been as extensive. But whereas Ethno students emerged in a relative vacuum, aspiring filmmakers since then enjoy the existence of a prolific, working Third World film community. Ethno alumni have been central to building that movement and forging that community.

Ethno alumni pioneered a minority presence in independent filmmaking and public television programming. Both Chicano and Asian American Ethno graduates have been active in founding and organizing the Latino Consortium and the National Asian American Telecommunication Association.

In 1975 Sandy Osawa wrote and produced television's first Native American series, consisting of ten 30-minute segments for KNBC-TV, Los Angeles. After leaving UCLA Luis Garza got a job at KABC-TV in Los Angeles as the producer of "Unidos," which became "Reflexiones," and hired a number of Ethno alumni. According to Ruiz, "the 'Reflexiones' group started television's magazine format. We didn't know video so we talked them into giving us film, so we'd go out into the [Chicano] community and do 30-minute pieces." Ruiz, Morales, Esparza and Francisco Martinez are among the Chicano alumni

who have remained active in the production of documentaries about their communities.

What happened to the Black Ethno students? Ethiopian filmmaker Haile Gerima (*Bush Mama*, *Harvest 3,000 Years*), who was a UCLA film student at the time, says, "Asian Americans were more organized. The Blacks tried to organize like that but were not as successful, although people like Larry Clark did have direct links to the Black community. The Blacks seemed more interested in going into the industry, and that's where a number of them that I knew are now." Unlike the Black Ethno students, most of the Asian Americans went on to become independents.

Visual Communications, the oldest and most prolific of Asian American production entities, also has its roots in the Ethno program. Ten years after entering the program a number of Ethno alumni were key personnel on its landmark production *Hito Hata: Raise the Banner*, the first Asian American feature ever produced. Former Ethno students included executive producer Tatsukawa and codirectors Nakamura and Kubo. Working cooperatively in Visual Communications, they and other Ethno students had already produced over a dozen films and tapes about Asian Americans. "Ethno-Communications is what Visual Communications had become," explained Kubo. "It's what we thought we in the Asian American community could do with media."

Thus the true measure of Ethno-Communications' impact goes beyond the number of filmmakers it trained, the hours of programming produced or awards won. Ethno challenged the basic premise of industry training, and many of its alumni have never lost that spirit. Whereas the media, in its racism and neglect, has traditionally been anathema to Third World people, here, for once, Third World people had the skills and a voice. ■

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## FESTIVALS

# Kicks at the Kijkhuis: Dutch World Wide Video

REYNOLD WEIDENAAR

The staid and stately Hague comes across as a Dutch version of Boston. As the administrative and diplomatic hub of Holland, The Hague exudes an appropriate air of sedate tranquility, leavened by a distinctly international flavor stemming from the large population of foreigners. Amidst the plethora of palaces and ministries, in the heart of the historic district, is the Kijkhuis. Literally translated as "view house" or "look house," it serves up a wide selection of beverages, sandwiches, pastries and magazines, and each September hosts the World Wide Video Festival.

In nearly all respects this six-day, noon-to-1 AM extravaganza stands as a model to the rest of the world of how to run a video festival. Selection of materials is held well in advance. In 1983, the selection committee held an open call for submissions and also viewed collections at European, American, Canadian and Japanese video centers. Selectees were notified about two-and-a-half months before the festival, and invited to attend. Travel expenses would not be covered, the organizers wrote, but "we can to some degree offer compensation for expenses of accommodation." This turned out to be a fully-paid room and breakfast for the week at the nearby Hotel Sebel, which had been entirely block-booked by the festival. *[On the other hand, several videomakers who were not selected complained about the lack of communication from the festival and the long time they had to wait for the return of their tapes. —Ed.]*

No prizes were offered, but a screening fee of \$50 was paid to each participant several weeks after the close of the festival. In addition, each producer received a full-page listing in the 119-page catalog. The Dutch have *de Stijl* when it comes to graphics, and this carefully produced, attractive document is a good example. Each page bears a large black-and-white still and informed, sometimes probing commentary and description in Dutch and English. (The compilers used no publicity materials, but shot and wrote their own material.) There was just one freebie catalog for each participant; additional copies cost \$3, but given the expense of publishing a catalog with trade-paperback quality, having to fork over a few guilders for an extra souvenir copy for Mom and Dad did not seem all that unreasonable.

The catalog was supplemented by a program listing the screening schedule for the entire week on one large sheet. The main body consisted of 124 tapes which were conveniently screened at four different times during the festival. Most of the tapes were shown at three different locations, each with comfortable theater seats: a 62-seat room with a gorgeous Sony VPH722QM 72" (diagonal) projector and stereo sound system, a 49-seat room with three monitors using internal speakers, and a 55-seat room similarly equipped. This last was in a storefront known as "Studio 122," a few doors down the street. Its lack of soundproofing was not too annoying until the Noordeinde



A deceased John Wayne stars in *Debate of the Dead*, shown at the World Wide Video Festival.

Street Fair got rolling later in the week. After that, most of the Studio 122 tapes were accompanied by the penetrating strains of "Muskrat Ramble" and other offerings of a thoroughly credible Dixieland band.

Three additional Kijkhuis locations were devoted to special screenings: a small, six-seat, one-monitor room with daily screenings of works by Jean-Luc Godard; a 27-seat, one-monitor room with daily screenings of 10 hours of videomagazines; and in the bar, two monitors displaying an anthology of the generally abstract works of pioneer Dutch video artist Livinus van de Bundt.

These six locations were all fed by decks located in one room. The equipment could handle NTSC, PAL, and SECAM, so no transfers were necessary. Tapes were carefully cued, avoiding color bars and countdowns. The dependability of the printed schedule turned out to be surrealistically rock-steady,

almost as if the staff had spent the previous week carefully rehearsing the entire presentation in advance.

The festival also offered a daily 10-hour program of 10 installations and performances at the nearby Galerie Artline. Another installation was exhibited at the Gemeentemuseum (Municipal Museum) about 2 miles from the Kijkhuis.

The variety of the selections was particularly striking, embracing nearly every conceivable genre and style of independent video: conventional and experimental narrative, documentary (generally political, sociological, historical or anthropological), comedy, satire, conceptual, punk, improvisational, image processing, music video, S&M, structuralist, abstract, public television, futurism and animation. Even a few renegade film transfers were in evidence.

Public attendance was good; the screening rooms occasionally became jam-packed, especially in the evenings. The bar area was always crowded and bustling with a hubbub of conversations in Dutch, German, French and English, although with few Americans, Canadians and British in attendance, English was strictly a second language.

There were no organized discussions or press conferences. Name tags assisted informal contacts, as did a growing wall-mounted display of candid Polaroid head shots of attendees. Local press coverage was excellent and voluminous in promoting and reporting the festival, and each day more clippings appeared on the Kijkhuis wall. (Information on international critiques has not materialized to date.) Buyers were not much in evidence, except for the Kijkhuis itself which, in addition to being a year-round screening and exhibition facility, distributes some 450 titles. Some producers were invited to sign up for exclusive distribution in Holland and Belgium, with non-exclusive distribution throughout the rest of Europe.

The staff was genial and considerate, if understandably harried at times. Guests were made to feel welcome, and staff members were particularly solicitous in making sure that the scheduling and locations of all offerings were clearly understood.

The most underwhelming feature of the festival was sound reproduction. Except for one location, sound was heard from the internal mono three-inch speaker of the video monitor. This serves well and may even be preferable for some works, but others clearly suffered.

Perhaps the nicest aspects were the otherwise high technical quality and conscientious organization throughout. Another plus was the generous repeat programming which offered the opportunity to view works more than once, or to do a little sightseeing without missing anything. This lent a very Hague-like air of tranquility to the proceedings.

Entries must be ¾" cassette, any standard. Deadline: early-mid April. Contact: Tom Van Vliet, Kijkhuis, Worldwide Video Festival,



Noordeinde 140, 2514 GP Den Haag,  
Holland.

*Video artist Reynold Weidenaar was recently awarded the Grand Prix at the 6th Tokyo Video Festival.*

## IN BRIEF

This month's additional festivals have been compiled by Melody Pariser and Wendy Lidell with the help of the FIVF files. **Listings do not constitute an endorsement**, and since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience with a given festival differs from our account, please let us know so that we can improve our reliability.

### Domestic

● **ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES AND ACADEMY FOUNDATION STUDENT FILM AWARDS**, June 10, recognizes outstanding achievements in student filmmaking of animation, documentary, dramatic & experimental. Cash prizes plus winners flown to CA for awards presentation. Completed work in 16 or 35mm (workprint OK). No entry fee. Deadline April 1. Contact: Elaine Richard, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills CA 90211; (213) 278-8990.

● **FILMEX**, July 5-20, will be held three months later than usual this year in order to coincide with the 1984 Summer Olympics. But the big news is the departure of long-time Filmex director Gary Essert & the arrival of former London Film Festival director Ken Wlaschin replacing him as creative director. Wlaschin was unavailable for comment at press time, and one can only speculate about the changes he will bring to this important American festival. On the surface, the programming philosophies of Filmex & London are not dissimilar, both festivals opting for broad eclectic programming of shorts, features & documentaries rather than the elitist selectivity practiced by some other events. Unfortunately, Essert's departure was prompted by an

### SYDNEY SELECTIONS

Rod Webb of the Sydney Film festival will be in New York on March 12 at the FIVF office to select shorts, documentaries & feature films for the 1984 festival in Australia. (For details see Jan/Feb INDEPENDENT). Webb is seeking mainly narrative features & fiction shorts under 30 min.

Films or tapes must arrive by March 12 & should be accompanied by publicity materials & the following fees:

- ¾" videocassette: \$13
- 2 cassettes or 16mm up to 30 min.: \$15
- 16mm film/31-60 min.: \$17
- 16mm film/61-90 min.: \$18
- 16mm film over 90 min.: \$20
- 35mm film: please inquire

Films & tapes will be returned via UPS on March 15 unless otherwise instructed.

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unhappy Board of Directors who accused him of financial mismanagement. No one on the outside really knows what went on, but it would be unfortunate if bad feelings were to affect participation, since Filmex has always been an important venue for independent films, a good place to see & be seen by colleagues in the industry. This year's deadline is April 1, & entries may be in 70, 35, 16, S-8 & 8mm. Contact: Ken Wlaschin, Director, Filmex, 6525 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood CA 90028; (213) 469-9400.

● **INDUSTRIAL FILM/VIDEO AWARDS COMPETITION**, October, recognizes & publicizes achievements of filmmakers from business, government, scientific & educational institutions. Films may be entered from any organization whose primary business is *not* film or video; producer & director *must* be co. employees. Work in 16mm & 3/4" U-MATIC can vie for an abundance of awards in these categories: advertising/sales; training/education/employee relations; public relations. Entry fee: \$25. Deadline: April 30. Contact: Barbara Hagin or Lynn Roher, *Industrial Photography*, 475 Park Ave. So., New York, NY 10016; (212) 725-2300.

● **HUMBOLDT FILM FESTIVAL**, May 7-12, enables student & independent films to be judged by professionals. This student-run fest brings the most current indie & student productions from all over the world into the area, vying for \$1,450 in prizes (including \$250 for best surrealist film). All entered films are viewed by judges; critiques sent to the filmmakers. 16mm only/max. 1 hr. Entry fee: \$15 indie or student/\$25 distribution co. Deadline: April 25. Contact: Mike Brown or John Heckel, Humboldt State University, Theater Arts Dept., Arcata CA 95521; (707) 826-4606.

● **NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE MEDIA**, August 24, is presented at the convention of the American Psychological Association & sponsored jointly with the American Psychological Foundation. Films should increase public's understanding of psychology & evidence scientific research. Work not screened at convention, but winner does receive \$1,000, trip to event and 3 days' expenses. Send 16mm film or 3/4" or 1/2" videotape. No fee. Deadline: April 15. Contact: Don Kent, APA, 1200 17th St. N.W., Washington DC 20036; (202) 955-7710.

● **NEW ENGLAND FILM FESTIVAL**, May, enables independent & student filmmakers residing in New England—ME, VT, NH, MA, CT, RI—a forum in which to exhibit & gain recognition for excellence in film. Fest offers cash, film materials & service prizes valued at \$1,000. Winning work shown at Boston Film & Video Foundation & in CT in May. Animated, documentary, experimental & narrative work in S-8 & 16mm should be sent by March 13. Entry fee: indies—\$20/students—\$10. Contact: Pam Korza, AES, Division of Continuing Education, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst MA 01003; (413) 545-2360.

● **NISSAN FOCUS AWARDS**, June 18, encourages excellence in college-level film training & study, offers financial assistance & professional visibility to students, & nurtures fresh talent for the film industry. Categories include narrative/live action, documentary, animation/experimental, screenwriting, sound achievement & editing. Prizes include cars, cash awards & a trip to Los Angeles for the award ceremony. \$15 entry fee. 16mm only. Ceremony presents students to distributors & studio

people. Deadline: April 20. Contact: Sam Katz, 1140 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036; (212) 575-0270.

● **PALO ALTO FILM FESTIVAL**, May 11-12, showcasing northern California independent filmmakers only, will be awarding \$1,500 to work in 8 & 16mm. Entry fee: \$10. Deadline: March 24. Contact: Brian George, Palo Alto Filmmakers' Guild, Palo Alto Cultural Center, 1313 Newell Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94303; (415) 329-2122.

● **ROCHESTER FINGER LAKES EXHIBITION**, Apr 29-June 3, restricted to Rochester & 19 surrounding counties, displays work of upstate NY artists. Film contest invites work in S-8, 8, 16mm, or 1/2" & 3/4" videotape; 30 min. max. Prizes total \$3,500. Bring work to receiving warehouse Mar. 29-31. Entry fee: \$15. Contact: Marie Via, Memorial Art Gallery, Univ. of Rochester, 490 University Ave., Rochester NY 14607; (716) 275-3081. ■

## Foreign

● **AUCKLAND INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, July takes place just after Melbourne & Sydney festivals in Australia, making a stop in New Zealand the natural complement to any filmmaker's tour "down under." New Zealand's TV networks are reportedly big film buyers, although the audience is naturally small. No awards/no fee. Deadline: April. Contact: Max Archer, Auckland Festival Society, PO Box 1411, Auckland 1, NEW ZEALAND; tel: 33-629

● **ASOLO INT'L FESTIVAL OF FILMS ON ART & BIOGRAPHIES OF ARTISTS**, May-June, presents a critical survey of films on art & artists. Send features & shorts in 16 or 35mm. Awards given. No fee. Deadline: April. Contact: Flavia Paulon, Calle Avogaria 1633, 30123 Venice, ITALY.

● **CINE FOTO CLUB—TRECATE**, April, awards gold medals, public prizes & gives recognition to films of special merit. Fee: \$6. Deadline: April 1. Contact: Cine Foto Club—Trecate, C. SO Roma 48, 28069 Trecate, ITALY; tel: (0321) 73242.

● **CAMBRIDGE FILM FESTIVAL**, July 13-Aug. 1, a small festival targeting public rather than professional audience, is run as part of the older Cambridge Festival of the Arts. Last year's programs included independent films from Australia & the US: *Lianna* (John Sayles) & *Koyannisqatsi* (Godfrey Reggio) were shown, as well as British & foreign retrospectives. Fest's main reputation, however, is for promoting new British films. Contact: G.G. Datsun, Sec'y, Cambridge Festival Association, The Guild Hall, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire.

## SPECIAL THANKS

**FIVF** gratefully thanks  
the following individuals  
for contributions to the  
organization.

Lise Rubenstein,  
Hillsborough CA  
Arnie Malina, Helena MT  
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● **CRACOW INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL**, May 29-June 3, through its motto "Our Twentieth Century" presents review of short films, particularly those which reveal changes, trends & achievements of the 20th century. This may be a charming description, but due to the current political situation in Poland, Charles Samu of HBO claims, "Western films won't get very good treatment." He warned against American filmmakers entering Cracow simply because their work won't get showcased. Apparently the festival is now run by the military, & although there are no uniforms in sight, it's no secret that all of the film people were replaced with laypersons unfamiliar with film but part of the new order in Poland. The fest's focus is on Russian, Polish and other East European films. Many Polish filmmakers have been boycotting the fest. Samu said an American & Australian that went to Cracow last year reported a "downbeat atmosphere." Documentary, animated, fiction & experimental works under 30 min. are accepted in 16, 35 or 70mm. Golden & Silver Dragons awarded with cash prizes, but money is not convertible & must be spent in Poland. Deadline: April. Contact: Piotr Sokilowski, Director, Plac Ayciewstwa, PO Box 127, 00-950 Warsaw, POLAND; tel: 26-40-51.

● **FLORENCE FILM FESTIVAL**, May 25-29, widens its participation this year to include not only American independent features, but international films as well. All films will be subtitled in Italian with "Softtiter," the new electronic subtitling system that displays titles below the screen and leaves print undamaged. Extensive outreach is made to Italian press & a selection of films from Florence will probably be brought to Rome for the Massencio Arts Festival (as was successfully done in 1983). Preference given to Italian premieres; selected filmmakers flown to the festival. Contact: Marco Mazzei, Italian Cultural Institute, 686 Park Ave., NY NY 10021; (212) 420-9448 or Fabrizio Fiumi, Director, Via Martiri del Popolo 27, 50122 Florence, ITALY; tel: (050) 245-869/243-651.

● **GOLDEN HARP TELEVISION FESTIVAL**, May, stimulates wider interest in traditional cultures through programs which reveal aspects of a particular cultural heritage as exemplified in its folklore, folk music & other traditional elements. Participation is restricted to broadcasting organizations that are members of the Int'l Telecommunications Union. A scan of their catalog indicated Americans have yet to receive so much as an honorable mention in 8 years. Send 16 & 25mm film or 1" & 2" videotape, max. 35. min. Deadline: April. No fee. Contact: Aindreas O'Gallchoir, Radio Telefis Eireann, Donnybrook, Dublin 4, IRELAND.

● **KARLOVY VARY INT'L FILM FESTIVAL** July 6-18, held alternatively with the Moscow Int'l Film Festival since 1946, is supported by the Czechoslovakian gov't; its motto is "for noble relations among people, for lasting friendship among nations." Along with Moscow, this is one of the largest & most prestigious festivals in Eastern Europe. Two competitive sections: one for films from each invited country and another for first works. There is also an information section (non-competitive screenings) & a section called "Contradictions of Today's World in Cinematography," which projects films of various genres dealing with topical int'l social problems. Roundtable discussions include filmmakers, theoreticians, journalists & producers. A variety of awards are presented. AIVF member Richard Pearce's Canadian-produced film *Threshold* won the Unitaire Prize in 1982. Entries accepted in 35mm only; no fee. For more information, contact: The International Film Exchange, 210 W. 52 St., 2nd fl., NY NY 10019. (212) 582-4318. The Exchange usually provides a US shipment of films and is the American contact for the Festival. To contact fest directly: Dr. Vanicek, Karlovy Vary Int'l Film Festival, Czechoslovak Film, Jinrisska St. #34, Prague 1 CZECHOSLOVAKIA; tel: 223751.

● **MELILLA, SEMANA DE CINE INTERNACIONAL**, May, invites 35mm films in the following categories to a competitive festival in this Spanish colony in Morocco: supernatural phenomena, Spanish cinema, foreign cinema, children's films & shorts. Enter by April 1. Contact: IX Semana de Cine Int'l, Carlos de Arellano, No. 10, Apartado de Correos 291, Melilla, SPAIN; tel: 952-68-48-42 /952-68-11-40.

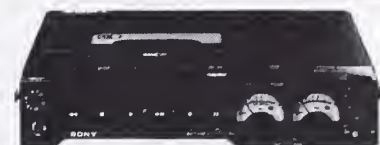
● **MEMOIRES OUVRIERES** ("Workers' Remembrances"), May 24-29, invites American entries into competition of feature films in Nevers, France. Interested in "the subterranean world of the most difficult daily life, that of work in manufacturing, in the workshops, in the factories, in the search of our memories." Six narrative & six documentary features compete for prizes amounting to 10,000 francs, preferably awarded to the film's distributors or to exhibitors, primarily non-profit, who use the film. Also a prize of 5,000 francs awarded by the press. First festival, held in 1983, featured retrospectives of German proletarian films from the period 1920-1933, and such titles as *The Working Class Goes to Heaven*, *They Don't Wear Black Tie*, *Days of Heaven*, *The Crime of Monsieur Lange* and *Moonlighting*. Competition included films from Algeria, Upper Volta, Brazil & Finland. Entries due by Mar. 31 & should include a synopsis, film credits, director's biography & picture, dialogue list & translation. Fest also wants authorization to subtitle films, show excerpts on TV & present in a touring package. Contact: Robert Grelrier, 18 rue Gaston Monmousseau, Batiment C, 94200 Ivry, FRANCE; tel: 671-65-03.

● **SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL**. Takes place in June. Deadline: April. Contact: Rod Webb, Director, Sydney Film Festival, Box 4934 GPO, Sydney NSW 20001, AUSTRALIA. For more info, see Jan/Feb 1984 *Independent*, p. 30.

● **VELDEN AMATEUR FILM FESTIVAL OF NATIONS**, June, awards amateur documentary, travel, games, fantasy & experimental work in S-8, 8 & 16mm under 25 min. Winners may be screened on Austrian TV. No fee. Deadline: April. Contact: Filmclub Klagenfurt-Kurrerwaltung Velden, W. Hufsky & F. David—Directors, A-9220 Velden Am Woerthersee, Kurverwaltung, AUSTRIA; tel: (0-42-74) 2103.

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## NOTICES

**NOTICES** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others included as space permits. Send notices to THE INDEPENDENT c/o FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New

York, NY 10012. For further info, call (212) 473-3400. Deadline: 8th of second preceding month (eg. March 8th for May). Edited by Mary Guzzy.



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● **PROFESSIONAL VIDEO REPAIR, MAINTENANCE** of broadcast & industrial cameras, decks, monitors, calibration of wave-forms etc. We buy & sell used equipment. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony VO-2860 editing VCR, \$2,500; Arriflex BL pkg. w/400' mags, Zeiss 10-100 crystal lock, battery belt, shipping cases, \$5,500; Nagra E non-sync 1/4" fulltrack recorder, mint condition, \$1,200; Uher 4000 Report L 1/4" mono recorder w/case & power supply, \$150; Miller wooden legs, \$100; Sony AV-3400 EIA portapak w/AC adaptor & case, \$200; Sony AV-8650 EIAJ editing VCR, \$300; Sony VO-3800, AC-3800 & K&H padded case (needs work), \$400; Elmo/Honeywell Double S-8 camera w/power supply, modified for double system sound, \$100. Contact: YF/VA, (212) 673-9361, NY.

● **FOR SALE, RENT OR EXHIBITION:** Largest collection of Chicago Dance on color 3/4" videotape. 3-camera production w/terrific switching effects. Also, 42 min. 16mm color sync-sound film made entirely by teenagers. Winner of 1982 NEA Morrie Turner Award & subject of 90-min. WBBM-TV (Chicago CBS affiliate) June 1982 special. Contact: Shoulder High Eye, PO Box 5985, Chicago IL 60680, (312) 421-5536.

● **FOR SALE:** Arri 16-S w/sync generator, 12-120 zone, 400' mag., battery, tripod, changing bag, 2 motors, cases, many extras. \$8,500 value, asking \$3,200. Contact: Jim Hubbard, (212) 925-4514, NY.

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(Please note that phone number for this notice was printed incorrectly in Jan./Feb. issue.)

## Conferences • Workshops

● **COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA** offers Editing Techniques, Sat. & Sun., March 3-4, 10 am-6 pm. Cutting, sync-sound, A&B rolling, preparation for mix. Work on flatbed. \$85. Alan Berliner, instructor. 10% tuition discount for CLC members. Limited enrollment. Contact: CLC, 52 White St., NY NY 10013, (212) 925-3926.

● **PRODUCTION EAST:** New trade event for East Coast entertainment production industries at New York Hilton, May 21-23, 1984. Conference section includes over 70 seminar sessions covering issues vital to economic survival of companies in television, cable, feature film & advertising communities. Exhibition areas in Production Services, Hardware & Specialized Production Companies. Contact: Victor Harwood, (212) 475-3356, NY.

● **NORTH AMERICAN TELEVISION INSTITUTE** full-day & half-day seminars designed to strengthen video professional's skills in editing, directing, scripting, lighting, sound audio field/post-production, computer animation, technical troubleshooting, management & video production techniques. March 13-16, Washington DC; April 10-13, Seattle WA. Contact: Ellen Parker, Knowledge Industry Publications, Inc., 701 Westchester Ave., White Plains NY 10604, (800) 431-1880/(914) 328-9157, NY.

● **ISRATECH:** Israel Technology Week at Tel Aviv International Trade Fair Center, May 21-24, 1984. Over 200 Israeli manufacturers launch state-of-the-art technology in such categories as communications systems & products, & electronics. Running concurrently is Fourth International Jerusalem Conference on Information Technology covering broad range of topics on computer technology & applications, economics & management of information industry. Contact: Peter Muhrad, Israel Trade Center, 350 Fifth Ave., NY NY 10118, (212) 560-0666.

● **SPRING WORKSHOPS AT YOUNG FILMMAKERS/VIDEO ARTS:** Professional instruction in film/video production & theory designed for both novices & professionals. Course lengths range from weekend workshops to 12-week programs including Documentary, Location & TV Studio Production, Directing for Camera, Lighting, Audio, Film & Video Editing, Screenwriting & Videodance. Equipment rentals & postproduction facilities available for independent producers, artists & nonprofit groups at low cost. Free brochure available. Contact: YF/VA, (212) 673-9361, weekdays 10 am-6 pm, NY.

## Editing Facilities

● **3/4" COMPUTERIZED EDITING FACILITY FOR RENT:** Available on month-to-month basis. Unlimited hours; low monthly rate. Perfect for film-style video rough cuts. Call: (212) 689-7511, NY.

● **FULLY EQUIPPED** 16mm editing room for rent. 6-plate Moviola table. 24 hr. access in Film Center Building. \$600/mo. Contact: Joe/Steve, (212) 875-9722/582-9692, NY.

● **SUNNY, ATTRACTIVE, FURNISHED OR UNFURNISHED OFFICES** w/private entrances near West Village. 1 & 2 room suites.

Conference/screening room & office equipment available to share. Very high floor, panoramic views, small terraces, air-conditioning, excellent security. 24-hr. building. \$550/mo. single, \$850/mo. double. Short or long term sublet. Contact: David Greaves, (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **EDITING ROOM:** Fully equipped w/6-plate Moviola flatbed, bins, synchronizer, viewer & splicer. Near West Village. High floor, panoramic view, small terrace. Conference/screening room available to share. Also, office & office equipment for sublet. 24-hr. building; excellent security. Contact: David Greaves, (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **C&C VISUAL LTD.** announces Suite 27, on & off-line video editing facility. Includes Sony Betacam, BVU 800, BVH 2000, Sony edit controller, character generator, CMX-compatible production switcher, punch tape & hard-copy for time code. Projects can be completed on 1" & 3/4" masters. 24 hr., 7 day/wk. access. Contact: Christopher Cohen/Ian Greenstein, Suite 27, 12 West 27 St., NY NY 10001, (212) 684-3837.

● **TWO COMPLETE EDITING ROOMS** in Chelsea: (a) 2h-hr. access: Moviola flatbed w/torque motor box; complete 16mm edit equipment; complete kitchen & bathroom; minimal office facilities; telephone; air conditioning. (b) 10am-6pm access: Steenbeck; complete 16mm edit equipment; ltd. kitchen, bath facilities; specialized edit equipment available at extra cost. Contact: David Loucka, Lance Bird, (212) 584-7530, NY.

● **EDITING & POST-PRODUCTION FACILITIES AVAILABLE:** Short-term rentals only. 9am-5pm business days. KEM 8-plate 16/35mm, 3/4" editing, sound transfer, narration recording, extensive sound effects library, interlock screening. Contact: Cinetudes Film Productions, 295 West 4 St., NY NY 10014; (212) 966-4600.

● **BRODSKY & TREADWAY S-8 & 8MM FILM TO VIDEO TRANSFER MASTERS:** Scene-by-scene density & total color correction, variable speed & freeze frame, sound from any source. Artists & broadcasters like our work. By appointment only. Call (617) 666-3372, MA.

● **STEENBECKS FOR RENT:** Moderately priced by the month. Delivered to your workspace. Prompt repairs included. Call: Paul, (212) 316-2913, NY.

● **LARGE, COMFORTABLE EDITING ROOM** w/KEM 8-plate Universal editing table, 16mm & 35mm, rewinds, bins, splicers, synchronizers, etc., private phone, additional office space available. Midtown location. Call: Errol Morris Films, 1697 Broadway, NY NY 10019, (212) 757-7478/582-4045.

● **SONY TYPE V EDITING EQUIPMENT:** Excellent hourly rate if you use average 10 or more hrs. editing time per month. Contact: Michael Schwartz, (212) 925-7771/966-6009, NY.

● **REGULAR & S-8 FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER:** Professional quality, industrial or broadcast; much better than you've seen before. Supervised or unsupervised; reasonable rates. Contact: Landy, 400 East 83 St. #4A, NY NY 10028; (212) 734-1402.

● **SONY BVU 3/4" EDITING:** \$25/hr. w/editor. Contact: Kathy Abbott/Karen Ranucci, (212) 242-2320, NY.

● **EDITOR OF ACADEMY AWARD**-nominated documentary now cuts 3/4" video off-line. JVC

decks w/FM dub, Cezar IVC microprocessor controller, special effects keyer & colorizer, fade to black, waveform & pulse cross monitor, b&w graphics camera w/animation stand & tiling system, mics, turntable, audio cassette, VHS time code burn in. \$25/hr. for projects under \$3,500. Contact: Bruce Ettinger, (212) 226-8489, NY.

● **29TH STREET VIDEO** "where the best edits cost less" offers 3/4" video editing & production svcs. Sony 5850 decks, RM440 editor, Microgen character generator, fade-to-black, audio mixer, mics, audiocassette tape recorders & more. Production svcs. include JVC KY-2000 camera, Sony 4800 deck, tripod, production mics, lights, more. Contact: Tami/David, (212) 594-7530, NY.

● **POST-PRODUCTION SERVICE:** 3/4" U-Matic recorder w/RM-430; VHS to Betamax/user or technician operated. Viewing & cataloguing: 3/4", Beta II or III, 1/2" VHS or open reel. Contact: Asian Cinevision, (212) 925-8685, NY.

● **VIDEO EDITING & TIME CODING:** 3/4" hi-speed video editing on new JVC 8250 w/convergence control. \$20/\$30 per hour. Low rates for time coding & time code editing. Call: Inpoint Production, (212) 966-0804, NY.

● **FOR BARTER:** Use of complete 16mm editing room w/flatbed in exchange for use of Nagra w/crystal; for transfer only. Contact: Jill Godmilow, (212) 226-2462, NY.

● **8-PLATE KEM UNIVERSAL** for rent w/fully equipped room. \$250/wk., \$750/mo. Convenient midtown location. Call: (212) 222-5280, NY.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

● **NEW IMAGES**, cable TV series scheduled to premiere May 1984 will showcase short works by cable, video & film producers in variety of categories. Project of Boston-based Cultural Education Collaborative's Video Interconnect funded by Massachusetts Council on Arts & Humanities. Selections made by panel of programmers, artists & producers. Works chosen for cablecast will receive maximum \$20/production minute. Projects may originate in 3/4", 1/2" or film. Submissions must be 3/4" video. 15 min. maximum length. Include return postage. Deadlines: Video Art, Music March 5, 1984; Dance & Documentaries March 19, 1984; Animation, Drama April 9, 1984. Contact: Video Interconnect, CEC, 59 Temple Pl., Boston MA 02111, (617) 338-3073.

● **ART COM TELEVISION**, cable program scheduled for launch in Fall '84 will deliver to cable viewers in 8 major markets best in TV art & creative investigation of new technologies. Seeking artist-produced programs, experimental, music video, reports on robotics, interactive media, special effects, production hardware & facilities. Submit 3/4" U-matic tapes for programming consideration. Include return postage. Contact: Carl Loeffler, Executive Director, ArtCom TV, POB-3123 Rincon Annex, San Francisco CA 94119, (415) 431-7524.

● **JACKPOT PRODUCTIONS**, releasing agents for independently produced film/video, seeks new properties for catalog. General appeal & commercial salability required. Will cut previews, design & print advertising, make copies for distribution. Broadcast quality 16mm., 3/4" or 1/2" only. Contact: Janice Governale, Director of Distribution/Ac-

(continued on page 28)



## IN &amp; OUT OF PRODUCTION

MARY GUZZY

We thought we'd start off this month's column with what has become affectionately known as a Horrible Statistic concerning the current outlook for artists and the arts: According to the American Arts Alliance, the Washington arts advocacy group, the entire budget of the National Endowment for the Arts in FY 1984 would buy exactly one inch of a Trident submarine. (That's \$162 million per inch.) Film, video and radio artists share the \$8.8 million Media portion of the total NEA pie (about 6%). Our estimation is that this would pay for the paint you could scrape off the hull with your fingernail. P.S.: The FY 1984 NEA budget was increased by about \$8 million over FY 1983. And now the news:



## SUCCESS SHORTS

Animators comprise a sector of the independent community that is hard-pressed even in the best of times, so it was good news when the Donnell Media Center of the NY Public Library decided to acquire Judi Fogelman's most recent animation, *Leaf Dance*. Created in 16mm color with ink and paint, the film portrays colored leaves blowing in an autumn wind accompanied by a background score of traditional Peruvian flute music. 800 separate visual pieces make up *Leaf Dance* and the two-and-a-half minute film's estimated budget was \$5,000, not including labor. Fogelman has been making films for about five years. She's optimistic about the day when she'll have been around the scene long enough to be recognized by larger funding entities, but for now she raises money for her projects through freelance survival jobs and bartering her artistic and clerical skills for in-kind contributions of materials from the advertising and public relations firms with which she works. She views getting films made and surviving as two parts of one design, "a matter of problem solving." Fogelman is currently working on another short animated film entitled *Waho*, dedicated to an artist friend, George Namoki, who died in 1982. (212) 840-1234, NY.

The prolific Mike Manetta (*Through the Past to the Future: A Journey Down the Nile*, In/Out July/Aug, 1983; *Trail of the Sphinx*, In/Out Oct. 1983) has completed a 16mm slide-animated short called *Parade '83*, "an anthem for the gay/lesbian movement as viewed from the perspective of its June Solidarity Parade." *Parade '83* was screened at the 1983 NY Gay Film Festival. Manetta's short projects are self-financed (he's also the producer of the 1980 feature musical comedy *Love Thing*), and he doesn't rely on expensive special effects generators to create his slide

Coming out: Anti-gays in Mike Manetta's *Parade '83*.

animations. "But," he says, "sometimes artists working under resistance make better art." His next project will be a slide-animated film with synthesizer soundtrack commemorating the gigantic Brooklyn Terminal Art Show. Eventually, Manetta plans to move into producing music video now that the format ("still in its infancy") is moving towards lengthier, story-oriented pieces woven around the musical performances—a format through which, Manetta thinks, TV audiences may rediscover the dramatic musical form. (212) 786-5001, NY.

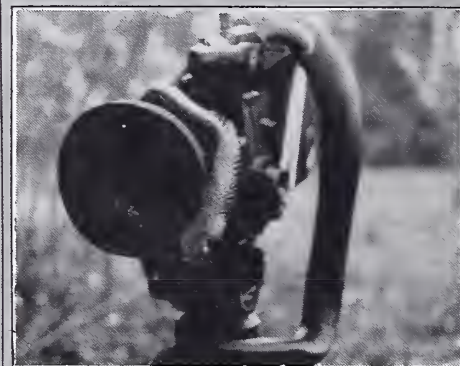
Not to be outdone by narrative and art filmmakers, producer Oren Rudavsky has completed two documentary projects. *Ghosts of Hiroshima* is a video documentation of the Lantern Theatre production which incorporates testimony of the survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings with archival photographs. Rudavsky and Henry Cline produced the 28-minute color tape; script research by Debra Lubar and Diana Roose. *Ghosts of Hiroshima* is available through the Filmmaker's Library, 133 East 58 St. #703A, NY NY 100012, (212) 355-6545.

*Gloria*, Rudavsky's 30-minute doc about police brutality and race relations, focuses on the survivor of a police shooting in Lorain, Ohio. *Gloria* follows the three-year battle between the NAACP and other community groups, the mayor, city council and police to resolve the issues surrounding the case. While *Ghosts of Hiroshima* received funding from the Ohio Humanities Council, *Gloria* was supported by the Ohio Arts Council. (212) 222-9008, NY/(216) 323-7120, OH.

Producers Ben Achtenberg and Joan Sawyer of the Boston-based Fanlight Productions have collaborated with registered nurse Christine Mitchell to produce *Code Gray: Ethical Dilemmas in Nursing*, a 27-minute, 16mm doc depicting four situations in which nurses must make serious ethical decisions affecting the well-being of their patients. Filming for *Code Gray* took place in California and Massachusetts and was supported by grants from the Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy, the California

Council on the Humanities and others. Other documentaries distributed by Fanlight, which recently merged with Plainsong Productions to form a production, consulting and distribution concern are chiefly about issues of health and human development. Two its films—*I Don't Have to Hide: A Film About Anorexia & Bulimia* by Anne Fischel, and *Trying Times: Crisis in Fertility* by Joan Sawyer—have garnered American Film Festival red ribbons. (617) 524-0980, MA.

Larry Hott and Roger Sherman of Florentine Films have produced a half-hour documentary about the economic and scientific resource value of rare and endangered species and the rationale for preserving species in their natural habitats. Entitled *The Garden of Eden*, the project was created for the Nature Conservancy, a private Virginia land conservation organization which commissioned Florentine Films for the project after reviewing applications from several film companies. Production was sponsored by the the Continental

Snake and Aaton, stars of *The Garden of Eden*.

Group, which provided \$168,000. "That job helped us to eat for the past two years," Hott observed.

Florentine's own project, *Niagra* (In/Out, July/Aug. 1983) has been minimally funded by the New York State Council on the Humanities; they are continuing to fundraise for completion monies while they forge ahead with production. "We're about one-third through with production," says Hott, "and intend to begin editing in late spring or early summer."

The Nature Conservancy, by the way, will loan *The Garden of Eden* at no charge to interested groups and individuals. Contact: TNC, 1800 Kent St., Arlington VA 22209, (703) 841-5342.

Home Box Office has leased producer/director Paul Kirshbaum's short film, *Final Moments*. The four-minute, 16mm color character study portrays the end of a love relationship and the bittersweet memories of its happier moments seen in flashback. James Hayman and Michael Hunold were camera and assistant on the piece. Jeffrey Brown and Gwen Bucci portray the couple. The film is distributed by ICAP, 625 Broadway, NY NY 10012, (212) 533-9180. Kirshbaum, an alumnus of the NYU undergraduate film school, is currently working on several projects in-



cluding a grant proposal for a video piece, a treatment for a feature film script and an application to the Center for Advanced Film Studies at the American Film Institute. He produced *Final Moments* for about \$3,000. "Raising money is the continuous frustration," he says. "It slows down the rate at which you can create your art." But a strong motivation keeps him going: "It's such a high to direct. It's what I like to do."

AIVF's Festival Bureau director, Wendy Lidell, saw her own film *Tactics* screened at the Rotterdam International Film Festival in January. The 13-minute, 16mm color narrative depicts the rocky meeting between two women whose radical political activities in their college days brought them into a close friendship despite a difference in class backgrounds. Years later, they find that the life choices they have made since that time have opened a wide gulf between them: one has become a lawyer and all but repudiated her past while the other still carries the activist torch. (212) 473-3400, NY.

## FEATURE FRONT

Chris Choy, Alan Siegel and Worth Long have begun an extensive national tour with their film *Mississippi Triangle*, a documentary about the complex interaction among Blacks, Chinese and whites in the Mississippi Delta region. Released by Third World Newsreel and Film News Now Foundation, *Mississippi Triangle* received major support from the National Endowment for the Humanities with additional funding from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. The film depicts the current Delta scene as well as surveying the rich history of its delicate racial and cultural balance from survival and conflict to civil rights and economic change. All this on a budget of \$250,000.

Before it comes to New York City in the spring, *Mississippi Triangle* will visit Montgomery, Houston, Boston and San Francisco and will be screened at the 1984 Berlin International Film Festival. (212) 243-2310, NY.

Brown University film professor Leandro Katz is deep in production of a 90-minute, 16mm color feature called *Mirror on the Moon*. Inspired by the stories of H.G. Wells and Jose Luis Borges, the script is written by Katz with dialogue by Juliana Fusco, Peter Wollen and Ted Castle. The story concerns the disappearance of a woman and her lover's attempts to find her aided by a number of her left-behind notebooks, written in a mysterious code. Although it's a suspense thriller complete with empty houses and furniture covered by strange silvery dust, don't believe for a second that this is an ordinary mystery movie. "The film deals in a narrative way with the presence and absence of the female form," says Katz. "Suspense and desire are created by her absence and she is the motivating force for the three male characters, though she appears only in the dream sequences."

So far, the budget for *Mirror on the Moon* is a mere \$75,000, and the film is scheduled for completion this summer when it is slated for broadcast on Swiss, German and Austrian television. West Germany's ZDF and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts have provided funding, and Katz is negotiating with Britain's Channel Four for a possible co-production deal. In the United States he's aiming for theatrical release. (401) 863-3178, RI.

Allen and Cynthia Mondell garnered a Cine Golden Eagle for their 60-minute docudrama, *West of Hester Street*. The historic saga of Jewish immigration to the port of Galveston, Texas in the 1900s is woven around the story of a young Jewish peddler's adjustment to life in the still-wild West. The film was enthusiastically received at the San Francisco Jewish Film



Jewish "cowboy" & friend in *West of Hester Street*.

Festival and the Philadelphia Film Festival. *West of Hester Street* was funded by the Texas Committee for the Humanities and a \$137,000 challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Fundraising took one exhausting year while research in archives, Jewish community services and museums across the country consumed another four. The film is narrated by actor Sam Jaffe, but aside from this one California transplant, *West of Hester Street* is an all-Texas creation including crew, actors, composer Phil Kelly and labs. Distributed by Media Projects, Inc. of Dallas, *West of Hester Street* is showing at selected film showcases around the country. (214) 826-3863, TX.

Video producer Michelle Parkerson's documentary *Gotta Make This Journey* was aired on PBS in February. A 60-minute color profile of Sweet Honey in the Rock, a Black women's acappella ensemble, *Gotta Make This Journey* highlights the individual lifestyles, social concerns and outreach to the deaf community of this remarkable group. The film is now in distribution through the Black Filmmaker Foundation, (212) 619-2481. Parkerson reports that she has received research and

development money from the Gay Education Fund of Washington DC for a new work about the Jewel Box Review, a group of female impersonators who toured the black theater circuit during the 1950s and early '60s.

## SERIES REPORT

In January "Paper Tiger Television" produced its 50th show. The public access series aimed at "smashing the myths of the information industry" appears every Wednesday at 8:30 pm on Manhattan Cable's Channel C. A repeat cablecast occurs on succeeding Thursdays after 4:30 pm on Channel D. On each program media watchers, writers and artists from academia and the world-at-large read national publications and mercilessly scrutinize their legitimacy. This weekly critical analysis of the print media is available on videocassette for special screenings and classroom use. Guests on "Paper Tiger" have included Herb Schiller reading *The New York Times*, Joan Braderman with *The National Enquirer*, Brian Winston and *TV Guide* and Martha Rosler reading *Vogue*.

One of the more innovative uses being made of New York's public access channels, "Paper Tiger's" most expensive production has cost about \$400, the major expenses being rental of the studio and purchase of videotape. The production collective, which includes Dee Dee Halleck, Diana Agosta, Skip Blumberg, Marty Lucas, Pennee Bender, Roger Politzer and many others bears part of the costs; a recent \$8,000 NYSCA grant will keep the cameras rolling until this June. However, as the show moves into its second year, the producers of "Paper Tiger" have issued their first fundraising appeal. Without fiscal support for the increasing energy required to produce a responsible media-watch program, the series' continued existence could be in jeopardy.

And finally, to the West. AIVF member and indie producer Frank Morrow has been producing a weekly hour-long access program called "Alternative Views" in Austin, Texas for the past three years, and has to his credit over 200 programs containing extensive interviews with such social change activists as Dave Dellinger, Dr. Helen Caldicott and Dr. Benjamin Spock on subjects distorted or censored by the mass media. On an austere set decorated by three metal folding chairs, University of Texas philosophy professor Doug Kellner and Morrow engage guests in discussions of important political and social issues or air independently-produced documentaries with controversial angles. Operating on an annual budget of \$1,000 and the donated energies of Morrow and Kellner, "Alternative Views" utilizes University of Texas facilities and an Austin studio provided by the local cable franchisee at \$15/hr. Like "Paper Tiger," "Alternative Views" spends the bulk of its budget on videotape. A catalog of the series' programs is available for \$3.95 from "Alternative Views," POB 7279-N, Austin TX 78712, (512) 453-4894.



(continued from page 25)

quisition, Jackpot Prod., 2121 Wyoming St., Dayton OH 45410, (513) 252-0575.

● **STUDIO W** seeks women's films for screening on a regular basis. Call: (415) 641-9299, CA.

● **CHANNEL 35**, non-profit college station broadcasting from San Francisco State University, interested in new programming; anything from documentaries to current video art. Submit film or ¾" video. Contact: Susan Martin, Ch 35, SFSU, Broadcasting Dept., 1600 Holloway, SF CA 94132, (415) 753-0166/469-2353.

● **ATTENTION SHORT FILMMAKERS:** Show your work to Manhattan producers & audience on cable television. New program, "Film Is Art," to open up cable as outlet for short filmmaker. Filmmaker pays only film-to-tape transfer cost & keeps ¾" tape after broadcast. No additional fee. Contact: Scott Seip, (212) 838-6068 10am-4pm only, NY.

● **WORK WANTED** for series at San Francisco Cinematheque on use of chance operations in creation of time-based media. Emphasis on film, but may also present video, poetry, performance, musical work & related media. Documentation of process desired for catalog. Send work and/or description of use of chance. Deadline: March 1, 1984. Contact: James Irwin, Cinematheque, 480 Potrero Ave., San Francisco CA 94110, (415) 431-8717/558-8129.

● **FOX/LORBER ASSOCIATES**, specialists in TV marketing & distribution, expanding feature film library for representation. Interested in full-length English language films w/primarily narrative structure for sale to pay TV/cable, broadcast & home video, both domestic & foreign. Minimum length: 60 min.; no subtitles. Contact: Ericka Markman, Fox/Lorber Assocs., 79 Madison Ave., #601, NY NY 10016; (212) 686-6777.

● **PELICAN FILMS** seeks films/tapes for distribution to holistic health movement. We offer alternatives to traditional non-theatrical distribution. Contact: Arthur Hoyle, 3010 Santa Monica Blvd., #440, Santa Monica, CA 90404; (213) 399-3753.

● **NEW FILMMAKERS SHOWCASE:** Collective for Living Cinema continues its regular series of screening films by new filmmakers. Intention is to accommodate work by individuals who as yet have not had access to other means of exhibition. Emphasis on work of "personal" nature. Films in 8-8 & 16mm screened. Filmmakers attend & participate in discussion. Pre-screening required. Contact: Adam Zucker, (212) 966-0624, Andrea Sacker, (212) 989-5045, NY.

● **BROOKLYN ARTS & CULTURE ASSOCIATION** 18th Annual Expo accepting non-commercial, independently produced films & videos produced after December 1982 for representation at screenings in NYC & across US. Contact: BACA, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11238, (212) 783-3077.

● **SHORT VIDEOTAPES** wanted in 3 categories for spring/summer NY shows. Can offer small payments, amiable context & crack public relations. No. 1: Are you so ironic your tape scrambles when you lay hands on it? Then join in the Irony Show. No. 2: She Saw Sheshells Down by the Sheshore—Women's Performance Art Video (excerpts from live presentations; documents OK too).

No. 3: New Black Video—Call for hidden talent; the never-been-seens, the just-starting-outs, the too-shy-to-calls, etc. This means you. Send videotapes under 15 mins. for consideration to Hulser, AIVE, 625 Broadway, NY NY 10012. (Please include return stamped mailer.) Deadline: April 20, 1984.

● **RESEARCH, PLANNING & PRODUCTION ASSOCIATES** seeks independent productions under 30 mins. for domestic distribution to cable & industrial outlets. Special interest in nuclear subjects. Contact: Ann Perrett, RPP Assoc., PO Box 24736, LA CA 90024, (213) 820-7984.

## CORRECTIONS:

Our December article on EFLA's American Film Festival said that **Paul Jacobs and the Nuclear Gang** (Jack Willis, Saul Landau & Penny Bernstein) did not win a ribbon at the 1980 Festival. In fact, the film won a red ribbon in the "International Concerns" category. The incorrect sentence should have said that the film won a red ribbon, **instead of a blue**, for reasons detailed in the report.

In the December article on "The Territory" PTV show in Texas, a videotape was incorrectly credited. **Deus Ex Machina** was produced by Laurie MacDonald and Ed Tannenbaum and Randy Walters.

In the January/February issue we misspelled the name of photographer Jeremy Rothman who took the picture on page 26 in the "Video in the Boroughs" article.

## PS: Correction to the Corrections Department

In Jan/Feb Field Reports part of our headline migrated to greener pastures. It should have read: **Skewed Priorities Dog Canada's Video Olympics.**

## Resources • Funds

● **NORTH CAROLINA VISITING ARTISTS PROGRAM** seeks high calibre professional artists in all disciplines for 9 mo., 1 yr. community residencies. \$12,000-\$18,000 w/benefits. Application deadline: March 1, 1984. Contact NC Visiting Artist Program, Community Development Section, NC Arts Council, Dept. of Cultural Resources, Raleigh NC 27611, (919) 733-7897.

● **SCRIPT:** Screenwriting Coalition for Industry Professionals & Teachers is newly formed constituency group of University Film & Video Association aiming to develop teaching & practice of screenwriting through more concerted interaction between instructors & industry. Contact: William Miller, School of Telecommunications, Ohio University, Athens OH 45701, (614) 594-6265.

● **NYSICA:** Applications for all programs due March 1, 1984. Contact: Mary Hays, New York State Council on the Arts, 80 Centre St., 8th fl., NY NY 10013, (212) 587-4968.

● **SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THIRD WORLD FILM/VIDEO MAKERS:** Young Filmmakers/Video Arts invites Black, Latino, Asian & Native Americans to apply for partial financial aid for any YF/VA courses. Call: (212) 673-9361, NY.

● **FOR US WOMEN:** New national publication offers latest information on grants, loans & awards for

women. Contact: For Us Publications, POB-33247, Farragut Sta., Washington DC 20033.

● **LIGHTING, GRIP EQUIPMENT REPAIR & MAINTENANCE:** Design special rigs & accessories; experienced w/HMI lighting units. 4 yrs. experience w/ Elmac dolies. Contact: Chris, (212) 499-3219, NY

● **OPPORTUNITIES IN PUBLIC ART:** This 15-yr.-old organization seeks artists interested in producing innovative public art for plazas, playgrounds & other public spaces in NYC. Contact: Vivian Linares, Cityarts Workshop, Inc., 417 Lafayette St., NY NY 10003, (212) 673-8670.

● **MOMA CIRCULATING VIDEO LIBRARY:** Museum of Modern Art parallel service to Circulating Film Library now rents & sells 45 titles by 42 videomakers representing US independent video from 1972 to present. 52 pp. catalog guide to collection available. Contact: Circulating Video Library, MOMA, 11 West 53 St., NY NY 10019, (212) 956-4204.

● **CHILDREN'S FILM ARCHIVE ESTABLISHED:** Dedicated to collection, exhibition & presentation of 16mm & 8-8 works by young filmmakers, kindergarten through 12th grade. Exhibitions will begin early Spring 1984 at Lincoln Center Children's Library & Queens College Center for Improvement of Education in Middle Grades. Archive is seeking works of any length, color or b&w, realistic or abstract made by students still in school through 12th grade. Contact: Lori Schneider Cramer, Children's Film Archive, Astoria Motion Picture & TV Foundation, 34-31 35 Ave., Astoria NY 11106, (212) 784-4520.

● **INTERAUDIOVISUEL**, French government agency established to promote co-production & exchange of diverse audiovisual products between US & France. Will acquire foreign programming for French public cable systems, give legal assistance regarding international audiovisual problems, provides database on audiovisual media & public library & documentation center. Contact: Yves Eudes, Interaudiovisuel, 34 Ave. Marceau, 75008 Paris, France, tel. 1-720-20-42.

● **PORTLAND CABLE ACCESS** has acquired new facility to be known as North Portland Access Center. Currently under renovation, completed facility will house offices, conference room, portable equipment, check-out, 2 editing rooms & 1,000 sq. ft. studio & complete control room. Contact: PCA, 5507 N. Lombard, Portland OR 97203.

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● **COMING OUT WEST?** NY indies planning to shoot in northern California or Bay Area can save



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## Opportunities • Gigs

● **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** at non-profit film arts center. Position available Oct. 1, 1984. Administrative, leadership, communications, organizational & fundraising skills required, as well as working knowledge of indie film community. Masters or equivalent. Send resume, 3 letters of reference & salary requirements before April 1, 1984. Contact: Search Committee, Collective for Living Cinema, 52 White St., NY NY 10013, (212) 925-3926.

● **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** at the Kitchen. Seeking candidates w/strong background in programming, fundraising & administration, knowledge of avant-garde art forms & substantial experience as director of not-for-profit arts organization. Job responsibilities include planning & implementation of artistic programs, general management & Board development for approximately \$1-million operation. Send resume. Contact: Jeannette Vuocolo, The Kitchen, 59 Wooster St., NY NY 10012. No phone inquiries. EOE M/F/V/H.

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● **2 POSITIONS AVAILABLE** at Grand Valley State College; beginning August 1984 or sooner. Assistant Professor of Communications: Video/Film; & Associate or Full Professor of Communications w/assignment to Directorship of School of Communications. Both positions require

strong liberal arts/academic background, significant professional experience & skills in communications field. Send resume, statement of teaching philosophy, 3 letters of reference. Assistant Professor applicants include videography. Contact: Dean Forrest Armstrong, Division of Arts & Humanities, Grand Valley State College, Allendale MI 49401.

● **PRODUCTION MANAGER WANTED** to budget sci fi drama currently on rounds w/producers. Payment deferral until property is optioned or sold. Contact: Jim, (212) 564-6156, NY.

● **WANTED:** Filmmaker for 3-mo. Arctic expedition beginning summer 1985 from Toronto, Canada on 41-ft sailboat. Experience in marine photography & filming of sailing action. Must have his/her own 16mm equipment. Contact: Leslie & Carolann Sike, #712-100 Parkway Forest Dr., Willowdale Ontario M2J 1L6 Canada.

● **SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION** seeks film/videomakers for its roster of media artists available to work in its Filmmakers-in-Education program. Submit resume & copies of S-8, 16mm sound or silent films 3/4" color & b&w videotapes. Include production dates & self-addressed stamped mailer. Allow 6-8 wks. for review. Contact: Personnel Office, SCAC, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia SC 29201.

## Publications

● **VIDEO REGISTER 1983-84:** Completely revised 6th edition includes 3,000 professional TV operations in industry, medicine, cable, religion, government & education in US; 650 production/post-production facilities & wide assortment of consultants & video dealers. Listing of Cable Access/Origination Centers identifies more than 600 facilities where programming is produced for access & local cable origination channels. Hundreds of producers, resources & manufacturers listed. Softcover; \$47.50. Contact: Knowledge Industry Publications, 701 Westchester Ave., White Plains NY 10604, (914) 328-9157.

● **NEW ZEALAND FILM & TELEVISION DIRECTORY:** Comprehensive listing of facilities & professionals required to make films in New Zealand. Complete production survey. \$66. Contact: Marlyn Publishing, POB-7085, Wellesley St., Auckland N. Zealand.

● **ON ART & ARTISTS:** 60 pp. annotated catalog of videotapes distributed by Video Data Bank. Over 200 artists & critics talk on contemporary art. \$2. Contact: VDB, School of Art Institute of Chicago, Columbus Dr./Jackson Blvd., Chicago IL 60603, (312) 443-3793.

● **FEAR OF FILING: A Beginner's Guide to Tax Preparation & Record Keeping for Artists, Performers, Writers & Freelance Professionals.** 4th edition, edited by Theodore W. Striggles, Esq. & Barbara Sieck Taylor. Expanded sections on grant income, deductible expenses, unemployment, income from freelancing. New sections on surviving an audit, tax consequences of forming partnerships & corporations, income averaging. \$12.95 plus \$2 postage/first copy. \$1 postage/each additional copy. Contact: Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, 1560 Broadway, Ste. 711, NY NY 10036, (212) 575-1150.

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● **VIDEOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** w/JVC 4700 ¾" deck, JVC KY1900 3-tube camera, full audio & Mole Richards on location lighting setups. \$300/day. Flexible for longer shoots. Also available: multi-camera studio & control room, mobile multi-camera unit, ½" & ¾" editing. "We work within your budget." Contact: Mike, ProCam Productions, (516) 379-6492, LI, NY.

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● **ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR**, currently freelancing in print, looking for work in production design. Some film experience; resume, portfolio available. Contact: Eva, (212) 724-3879, NY.

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## Coming Attractions

- *Theatrical Distributors Pick Up Indies*
- *Outsiders & Insiders in Anthropological Film*
- *Interview with Alan Fountain of British Ch. 4*
- *Festivals: Mill Valley, Munich, Locarno*

## In upcoming issues of THE INDEPENDENT

### Trims • Glitches

● **URGENT CALL:** The Nicaraguan Film Institute (INCINE), co-producer of Academy Award-nominee *Alcino & the Condor*, has run out of film stock & can no longer obtain dollars to buy film on the open market. It needs 16mm color & 35mm color & b&w negative stocks. Anyone who would like to donate spare rolls of film, short ends & dated film should contact the NABET office as soon as possible. Those wishing to help buy film for INCINE may make checks or money orders to INCINE. Average cost of 1 roll of 16mm film is \$65. Contact: NABET, (212) 265-3500, NY.

● **COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA** touring program entitled "10 Years of Living Cinema—Selections" is available for rental through December 1985. Reflects artistic & social concerns of avant-garde filmmakers, 1973-1983. Features work of 23 filmmakers including Ernie Gehr, Robert Breer & Marjorie Keller. Contact: Mary Filippo, (212) 925-3926, NY. ■

*The Independent welcomes letters to the editors, send them to FIVE, 625 Broadway, New York NY 10012. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.*

## PRINCIPLES & RESOLUTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION

### AIVF FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Association is a trade association of and for independent video and filmmakers.
2. The Association encourages excellence, commitment and independence; it stands for the principle that video and filmmaking is more than just a job—it goes beyond economics to involve the expression of broad human values.
3. The Association works, though the combined efforts of its membership, to provide practical, informational and moral support for independent video and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival of, and providing for, the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.
4. The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.
5. The Association champions independent video and film as valuable and vital expressions of our culture and is determined, by mutual action, to open pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

### AIVF RESOLUTIONS

1. To affirm the creative use of media in fostering cooperation, community and justice in human relationships without respect to age, sex, race, class or religion.
2. To recognize and reaffirm the freedom of expression of the independent film and videomaker, as spelled out in the AIVF principles.
3. To promote constructive dialogue and heightened awareness among the membership of the social, artistic and personal choices involved in the pursuit of both independent and sponsored work, via such mechanisms as screenings and forums.
4. To continue to work to strengthen AIVF's services to independents, in order to help reduce the membership's dependence on the kinds of sponsorship which encourage the compromise of personal values.



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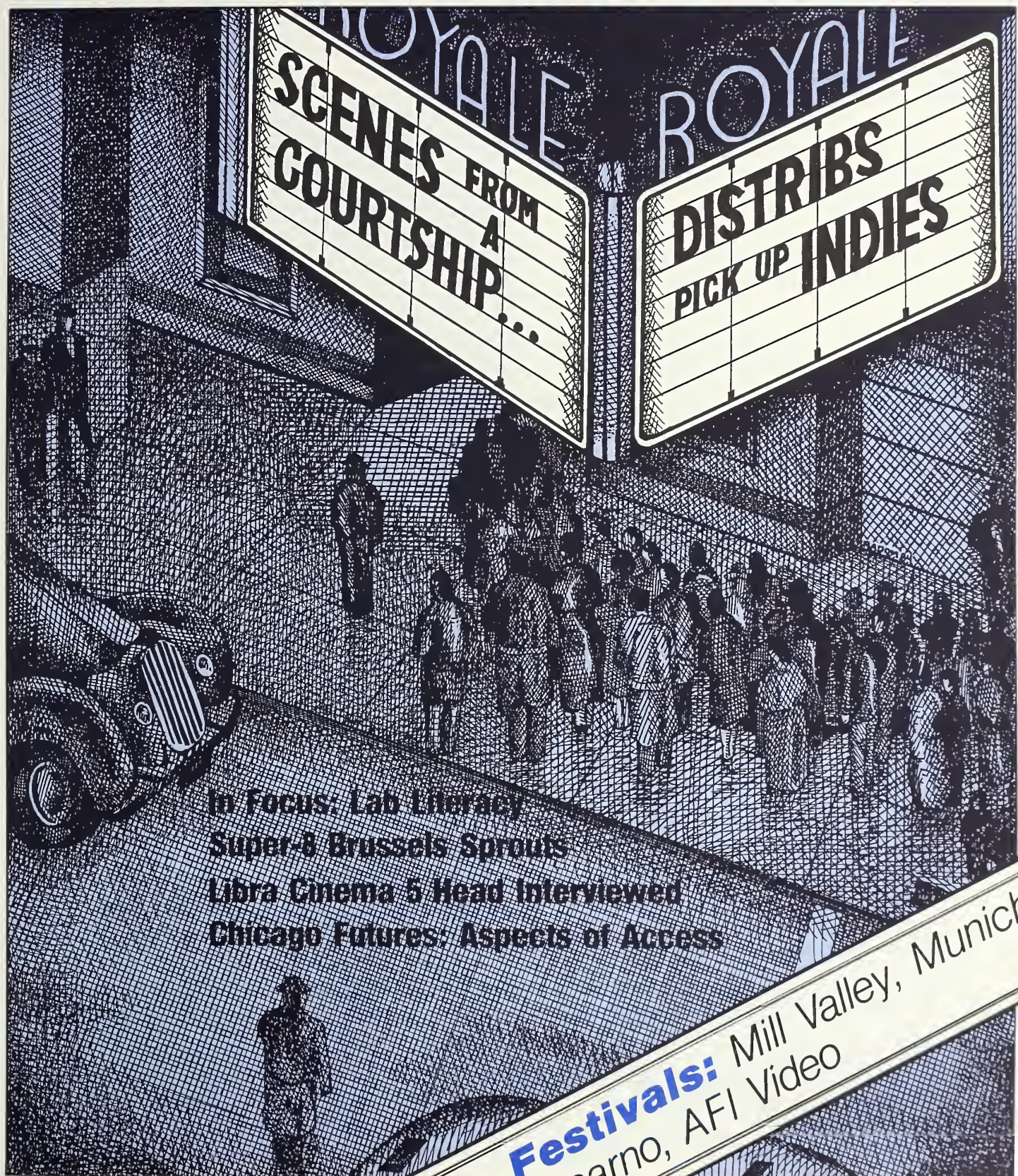
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In Focus: Lab Literacy  
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Chicago Futures: Aspects of Access

**Festivals:** Mill Valley, Munich  
Locarno, AFI Video



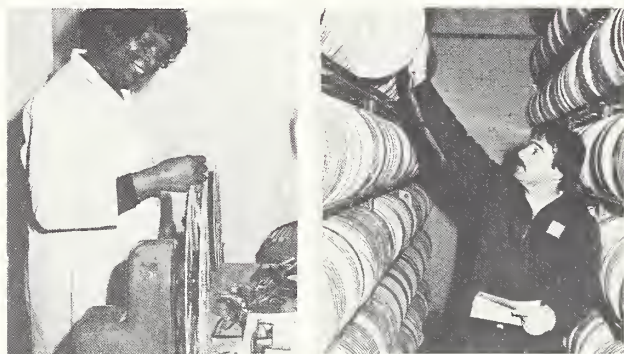
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*Edited by Mary Guzzu*

COVER: Are those lines for us, now that independents are finding wider theatrical distribution? See article by Renee Tajima, page 18. Illustration by Todd Radom.

## Letter from Sweden The Reflect Film Group

My first contact with filmmaking came in 1982, when I had a small job as an extra in a production for Swedish television. Ever since, I have been possessed by filmmaking. Soon after that job I decided to start a film-group. As far as I know there had never been one in Sweden before. Yes, there are some amateur groups, but I wanted a group of professionals. About 10 people answered my advertisement, and the group soon had 12 members; nine of us had previously worked with film in some capacity. The youngest member was 16 years old and the oldest (me) was 32.

We named our group Reflect Film and decided to make a short film to see how we worked together. A three-minute abstract Super-8 film called *EX 1* resulted, and we were pleased with our work. *EX 1* was shown at the Malmo Hall of Art in April 1983.

After that we wanted to make a longer film in 16mm. We wrote a script and a budget of about half a million Swedish kroner and sent it to the Swedish Film Institute, which funds filmmaking. They said, "No." During the same period I chased after money in every corner of Sweden and the answer was, "No, no, no." Finally the Malmo city cultural sup-

port committee gave us 68,000 kroner for a used 16mm film camera. We found a year-old Arri BL, and it's a beauty. I'm still chasing after more money for the other things we need to make a 16mm film, but we do have enough S-8 equipment.

Why have we created only two small S-8 films in such a long time? The problem is money. Also, we don't have any "free" TV stations in Sweden; Swedish TV is owned by the state and hardly buys any freelance productions. The Reflect Film members think it's terribly wrong that TV and radio should be owned by the state and we hope that a change will come. And maybe it will—but it takes time. There is a discussion going on in Sweden about whether Swedish TV should produce and show commercials. (We don't have them here—yet!)

Reflect Film is non-profit, and we don't have an AIVF organization for support. I hope we can start a dialogue between US independents and Swedish ones! We have problems here but we will not give in, and we think we have a lot to learn from US independents. If you are interested please send a letter to: Reflect Film, Osbygatan 16A, S-214 43 Malmo, Sweden.

—Annckie Espebo ■

*The Independent welcomes letters to the editors. Send them to FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York NY 10012. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.*



## MEDIA CLIPS

# Chicago Futures—New Aspects of Access Soon

DEBRA GOLDMAN

"Hurry up and wait" is the theme of most urban cable franchising stories, and Chicago's tale is no exception. Several years after the first request-for-proposals was issued, contracts for four of the city's five designated franchise areas were made public last January. Although the contracts still have several hurdles to cross before the city and companies sign the dotted line, the process has stirred the area's media activists. Currently putting its house in order is the Chicago Access Corporation (CAC), the independent access facilitator to which franchisees have tentatively committed several million dollars a year.

In the current arrangement, Chicago's future cable companies are obligated to provide CAC with three forms of support. These include a lump payment of start-up funds, a yearly allocation based on a percentage of revenues (with a guaranteed minimum), and equipment grants. Although Cablevision in Boston has pledged a larger percentage of revenue to access, the sheer size of the Chicago franchises will probably make CAC the most wealthy organization of its kind in the country.

Chicago-area independents, facing the prospect of all this money being invested in studios and equipment in their hometown, are wondering how they might fit into the picture. Back in 1971, when New York City first wrung a public access commitment from the cable industry, the mandate included no provisions for producing programming. Organized independent videomakers, running media centers on small grants, stepped into the breach, providing facilities and training for access producers. Today in Chicago, independents find themselves largely outside the heavily bankrolled access scene. The question for independents: Should they carve out a niche for themselves within CAC, and if so, how?

One Chicago mediamaker who would like to see some CAC dollars come independents' way is Howard Gladstone, president of Chicago Area Film and Video Network. "It would be naive to use this money to purchase equipment and build studios," Gladstone insists, "without creating a hospitable structure for independents and the tradition they bring with them. Independents have long been the primary reflectors of community concerns. And they have experience in creating creative programming."

The Network, a year-old coalition of media

organizations and producers groups, plans to present CAC with a proposal insuring independent access to CAC resources. At presstime, two versions of the proposal were under consideration. The first would establish a special production fund, for which area independents would compete. The second is an artists-in-residence program, also structured competitively. The AIR program would provide selected independents with a stipend and access to CAC facilities to create their own work; or, alternately, artists would go on salary, in return for which they would dedicate a certain number of hours per week assisting community organizations with getting their programs over the wire. Both structures, Gladstone admits, face an uphill fight.

The first challenge facing Chicago indies is to increase CAC's awareness of the media-maker community. The current CAC board consists of 17 individuals and representatives of 33 non-profit organizations selected by then-Mayor Jane Byrne last April. Despite a partially successful lobbying effort to increase the number of grassroots organizations, the Board of Directors remains top-heavy in institutions with solid political connections, representatives of Chicago's social service bureaucracies, and well-to-do citizens connected to various banks, hospitals, symphonies and museums. Woefully under-represented are independent producers: Ted William Theodore, a founder of the Center for New Television, Virginia Robbins of Community Television Network and a representative from the Catholic Television network all but complete the list. One board member, media activist Cathy Lang, notes ruefully, "There are people on the CAC who don't know very much about cable, let alone public access or production."

Lang, who is cable projects director at Concerned Citizens on the Media and one of the few CAC members with connections to the indie community, is sympathetic to Gladstone's concern that CAC resources be made available to independents, but doesn't consider this a priority. "CAC's first obligation is to maximize the ability of the public to utilize access. In the beginning we will be concentrating on constructing neighborhood studios and providing technical assistance." She acknowledges that the amount of money that will be invested in CAC is relatively large, but

adds, "CAC is a very capital-intensive effort. We have a huge area to service, and a lot of funds will go into maintenance and upgrade."

Another obstacle is the sticky question of copyright. "We're going to have to figure out who owns the tapes produced through CAC and whether CAC itself retains certain ownership rights," Lang said. "The Chicago cable ordinance is very specific: CAC-produced tapes cannot be used for any profit purpose whatsoever within the Chicago area. A videomaker will not be able to make a tape and sell it to, say, a suburban system." Selling tapes outside the Chicago marketplace is a legal issue still to be clarified. "CAC might be a good resource for those who want exposure and can afford *not* to make money," she says, "but first we have to see if the funds will be available."

Lang's "wait and see" attitude runs counter to some sentiment at CAC that, according to Gladstone, "no one should receive preference; if you fund one person over another, it's no longer public access." Much will depend on successfully convincing the board that financial assistance to individual independents is a valid means of serving the public interest. Yet there are independents in Chicago who doubt that the struggle will be worth it. Many balk at the tough non-profit strictures built into CAC. Rather than picking their way through the political landmines of the "independent" access corporation and playing yet another variation of the grants proposal game, some indies want to go straight to the marketplace: they are looking to sponsored programming for local origination and leased access channels. Some Center for New Television veterans like Theodore and Tom Weinberg are putting together the Chicago Channel with an eye to providing a channel with locally produced programming. However, as with many of the leased access channels promised by systems operators, there is concern in Chicago as to adequate regulation of leasing fees. "It is possible that national syndicators will dominate leased access," Gladstone says. "Fees might be set that would be cheap for them, but too expensive for independents." Indies who want a spot on cable, he maintains, need the insurance of a liaison within CAC.

It will probably be more than a year before cable is laid in the streets of Chicago, but Lang's advice to Gladstone and his co-workers is to immediately start creating greater awareness of independents' needs at CAC. Producers "should just start taking folks out to lunch," she suggests, "and see what kind of constituency they can get." At present the appointed board is drafting bylaws that will create the structure for electing a new slate of directors. That election is due by this August, and an organized effort might win crucial seats on CAC for indie producers, giving them influence over how the facilitator's money is spent. Gladstone may be right that access is an important aspect of the independent tradition. The question remains if it is also part of its future.

—DG



## Black TV Program Consortium Takes New Turn

The National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC), which was established three years ago "to assemble and distribute stereotype-free, positive image Black programs" to public television, has recently taken a sharp turn in direction and has begun to coproduce programming on its own. According to executive director Mabel Haddock, the NBPC intends to move into production because "it is difficult to find high quality American films that treat Blacks in a fair light"—a claim not likely to fare well among the struggling Black independent film community.

to slot its programming into special events such as Black History Month, Martin Luther King Day and Black Music Month.

Haddock says that lack of funding is forcing NBPC to move away from acquisitions. Of its \$200,000 grant from CPB (its primary funding source), \$70-80,000 is allocated for acquisitions. Depending on the quality of a production, NBPC pays \$30-200 per finished minute. Such a budget clearly allows for a significant volume of acquisitions from independents at a fairly competitive rate. If NBPC paid the maximum within its budget of \$200 per minute for five 60-minute acquisitions, money would still remain for other purchases. This year the organization received the same funding from CPB as in previous years, which, Haddock asserts, "with inflation and other economic concerns... is equal to a cut in funds." However, a percentage of those funds could be channeled back to members of the independent film community, many of whom are eager to produce those "alternative images."

Even at the prices currently paid, filmmakers are not ecstatic about NBPC's contract because it tries to secure *all* rights. Many independents feel that NBPC does not offer fees high enough to justify an exclusive, all-rights contract. Filmmaker Spike Lee (*Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads*) described NBPC's terms as "not favorable to filmmakers." Also, at least three of the filmmakers surveyed for this article reported that NBPC had not followed through on contracts and proposals.

As for the effort to undertake coproductions, it seems that so far NBPC and the Black independent film community have crossed wires and missed one another. Of NBPC's first three coproductions, at least two of the second parties involved are not from the Black community. *Never Turn Back: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*, a documentary about a woman who emerged from virtual anonymity to become a leading force in the Black voter registration drive of the 60's, was coproduced with Tracy Sugarman, while *Generations of Resistance*, a documentary which traces the history of Black resistance to white rule in South Africa, was coproduced with Peter Davis. Both are white producers.

Experienced Black independents may be understandably upset over seeing NBPC's money go to well-established white producers who could obtain financing elsewhere. Haddock said that "programs are acceptable when produced by non-Blacks as long as they represent the experience of Blacks in a positive light." She added, "Even in the case of programs produced by non-Blacks, there is usually a significant minority input." Given the realities of the Black presence (or lack thereof) on television, one must not be too eager to criticize efforts of this fledgling organization to establish itself and work with whoever produces positive Black programming, regardless of class or color. Nevertheless, it is puzzling that the consortium is



Michelle Parkerson's *But Then, She's Betty Carter* was picked up by the Black Programming Consortium.

NBPC, along with the Latino Consortium, the Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium, the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) and the Asian/Pacific Islanders Program Consortium, was established in 1981 by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as a supplemental program service to the Public Broadcasting Service, which had been under fire for its lack of minority programming.

NBPC's goals of "eliminating racial stereotypes and providing alternative images to those portrayed on commercial television" have remained constant, while its tactics for fulfilling such goals have drastically altered. In the beginning, NBPC claimed to focus its efforts on acquiring and programming the works of Black independents. (However, of the 140 titles in its 1981 program catalogue, only 24 were independently-produced programs.) Most of the consortium's programs were either 30-minute magazine format productions or "performance" pieces submitted by public television stations which are consortium members.

The change in stated programming strategy came as a result of a survey which NBPC circulated to its member stations in the spring of 1983. Station managers indicated a preference for documentary and performance materials delivered as mini-specials or in a mini-series format. Accordingly, NBPC now plans to coproduce up to five new programs a year and

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not stressing projects emanating from Black producers deeply involved with their own communities.

A poll of twelve Black independents reveals that many are not only unaware that they are supposed to be the "target market" for NBPC acquisition shopping, but don't even know the consortium exists. Only three were fully aware of the function of the organization, while two had been solicited for submissions but knew little about the organization. Of the three familiar with NBPC, one well-known figure declined to be interviewed because she "didn't think the organization was doing what it should be doing," and therefore "didn't really want to get involved." The complaint expressed by producer Michelle Parkerson (*But Then She's Betty Carter, Gotta Make This Journey*) and echoed by others was that even though there is now an increase in Black programming, "it is less than what it should be, too limited in its focus, and ghettoized. And it's played either all at once or at inopportune times." She further explained, "We don't see minority programming across the board on any given day. It's always a special occasion."

All of those interviewed agreed that NBPC—with its potential for creating and supporting quality Black programming

—should make a concerted effort to reach the Black independent film community. Many suggested that NBPC create some sort of alliance with the Black Filmmaker Foundation.

Unfortunately, NBPC's annual conference, traditionally one of its major links to the Black independent film community, has been cancelled this year due to insufficient registration. The problem was not a decline in the interest and energy of Black independents, but rather the absence of previously available travel stipends.

NBPC was not formed for the benefit of Black filmmakers but, rather, as a service to the Black viewing audience and to the public at large. Nevertheless, to ignore—or even appear to ignore—the voices and visions of the ever-growing group of Black independents would be a grave error. As the foremost representative of the Black public television community, NBPC cannot and should not allow itself to move too far from home base. For whatever reasons, its outreach to the Black independent film community has been insufficient and must be increased. From the other side, NBPC's admirable and necessary objectives need the dedicated, committed input and support of the entire media community. As always, in unity lies the key. —Daresha Ullah

## NSYCAnomics

As we go to press, hundreds of New York media artists and organizations are completing applications for the March 1 New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) deadline. But this year the applications may be considered under a greatly changed structure. The message has been sent down from Albany: trim the fat from the agency. But will a slimmed-down funder also mean a radically different and less responsive one?

During the past decade the number of applicants to NYSCA has grown by 50%, although its annual budget has shrunk from \$34 million to \$32 million and its staff has been reduced from 107 to 80. The Council has responded to the most recent budget mandate with two controversial streamlining measures: first, to combine the fiscal and artistic review functions of the program staff, and second, to offer multi-year funding to arts organizations with annual budgets of \$500,000 and over.

Currently, New York arts groups are funded by discipline on a year-by-year basis. Each application is reviewed by one program officer for aesthetic concerns and another for fiscal performance. Under the new plan, the application reviews will be conducted by one

## There's Always a First Time: CPB Bargains with Indies

In an unprecedented move, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has begun negotiations with a group of independent producer representatives in an effort to head off a potentially damaging confrontation on Capitol Hill this spring. After a five-hour bargaining session in Washington, DC on February 13, CPB agreed to recognize the 18-person *ad hoc* group as the Independent Producer Advisory Board to CPB (IPAB), to negotiate directly with IPAB on matters of long-standing dispute within 30 days and to develop a mechanism to help independents shape public TV policy in the future.

IPAB presented CPB representatives with four major demands:

- 1) a new definition of independent production which mandates that final editorial control rest with the independent producer;
- 2) the establishment of a set-aside of CPB funds clearly and specifically marked for independent production;
- 3) more consistent use of peer panels in the funding process;
- 4) strengthening of minority participation and programming in the entire public TV system.

For the last year, AIVF and other or-

ganizations have been trying to develop a coherent lobbying strategy in the face of the approaching Congressional CPB reauthorization hearings and in response to what many view as an increasing exclusion from CPB funding opportunities (e.g. the cancelling of *Crisis to Crisis*, *Non-Fiction Television* and *Matters of Life and Death* in favor of large station productions such as *Frontline*). After informal discussions with AIVF, CPB agreed to meet with various producers' organizations and flew their representatives to Washington for the February meeting. (It's likely that the haunting spectre of the reauthorization hearings combined with the recent embarrassing fiscal crisis at National Public Radio encouraged CPB to look upon an alliance with independents more eagerly than ever before. Last September, in a letter to CPB Board Chair Sharon Rockefeller which stressed these two factors, AIVF head Lawrence Sapadin urged CPB to align with independents and approach Congress with "a common vision for the '80s.") It was this group which, once in Washington, developed the four-point list of demands and constituted itself as IPAB. Among its members are representatives of the Native American Public

Broadcasting Consortium, the West Coast Coalition (representing independents in California, Washington and Oregon—see "West Indies," *The Independent*, March 1984), IMAGE Film/Video Center (Atlanta), Black Filmmaker Foundation, Boston Film/Video Foundation, Asian CineVision, SWAMP and Visual Communications (LA). Sapadin was designated its main spokesperson and negotiator.

Sapadin stressed that one of the largest achievements of the February meeting was the degree of unity achieved by the IPAB member organizations. "Initially, I think that CPB expected, and even hoped, that we'd come to the meeting with separate, and perhaps contradictory, lists of demands," he said. "They were unprepared for our unanimity. That such a diverse group of independents was able to reach such a solid consensus in so short a time bodes well for the future of the field."

Following the CPB meeting, a dozen independents met with Congressional staff aides involved with the public TV issue. They expressed a strong interest in seeing independents and CPB resolve their differences outside the legislative process, and offered to attend the next CPB-IPAB meeting as either observers or mediators. At presstime, the date of that next meeting had not been finalized.

—Susan Linfield



staffperson only, who will ostensibly be equally versed in both fiscal and artistic matters.

Barbara Haspiel, deputy director of Communication Arts, who oversees film and media programs at the Council, believes that dual reviews entail a lot of overlap. But some NYSCA program staff and members of the film/video community fear that many of the smaller groups with strong artistic merit but weak financial structures may suffer from the loss of the fiscal officers' personalized attention, fundraising and financial management, and assurances to the review panels that organizational problems can be ameliorated. (For example, as the administrative director of Asian CineVision during the years it developed from a minority community group into a national media arts center, I counted on staff from the arts agencies for consultation on both fiscal and managerial matters.)

Haspiel anticipates that the multi-year funding plan, which will allow some of the larger institutions to apply biannually, will alleviate some of NYSCA's workload and allow staff to devote more time to developing groups. Under the plan approved by the Council last fall, those groups qualified for multi-year consideration would be handled by a separate administrative staff, although their project applications will still be reviewed by discipline panels. For example, the Museum of Modern Art's film exhibition requests would still be decided by the film panel.

There is understandable suspicion on the part of smaller organizations that any separate policy for large institutions will inevitably become an unequal policy as well. However, according to Joseph Wells, NYSCA's director of public information, there will not be a separate budget category for the multi-year institutions. When asked how budget cuts would be handled, Wells replied, "Nothing is ever carved in stone in government arts funding. This year we decided to tilt in favor of small and medium-sized organizations at the expense of large organizations. I can't look into my crystal ball and tell you which way the council will go." Haspiel and Wells indicate that the council is considering the possibility of expanding the multi-year program to include organizations with budgets under \$500,000. But, beyond the bottom line, some small groups are also afraid that the separate funding of larger institutions will hurt unified advocacy efforts among arts groups.

Nothing in government funding is ever carved in stone, but some advocates of the smaller (which often means alternative) arts groups have not forgotten the battle to shape NYSCA's priorities in its first years. Some sectors of the state's art establishment saw the infant agency as a way to funnel state dollars to large established cultural institutions; new, alternative and minority organizations were included only as a result of strong lobbying efforts, and have retained a share in the funding pie because of constant vigilance.

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In the present case, longtime advocates of alternative arts organizations such as Haspiel do not see the new multi-year funding and staff-merging plans as precursors of future structural changes from above. But the arts community will be watching. —Renee Tajima

### Film & Video Fellowships Go from CAPS to NYFA

The long battle between the Creative Artists Program Service (CAPS) and the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) has reached a climax with the Council's recent decision to transfer over half of CAPS' functions to another administrator. Film and video will be among the categories transferred to the jurisdiction of the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), an organization which currently provides loans to arts groups and runs an artists-in-the-schools program.

CAPS was created by NYSCA in 1970 as an independent organization to channel money directly to individual artists. Since then its fellowships have been highly sought-after, no-strings-attached grants (with the exception of a public service), which are made on a one-time-only basis to artists.

But for the past few years CAPS and NYSCA have been at odds. In 1982 the Council, unhappy with CAPS' 38% administrative costs, imposed a 20% ceiling on overhead. CAPS responded by reorganizing its funding cycles to an alternative-year plan, with six disciplines funded one year, and another six the next.

Last year, in an unprecedented move, the Council solicited competitive proposals for the CAPS fellowship program. NYFA was awarded a contract to administer eight of the CAPS disciplines in addition to a new "crafts" category. On the surface, NYFA's fellowship plans do not differ markedly from the CAPS system, except that winning artists may be allowed to reapply after a certain period of time. Applicants in each category will be judged by a peer review panel which will tender its recommendation to a fellowship governing board. NYFA executive director Ted Berger indicated that the panels will be composed primarily (although not necessarily exclusively, as was the case with CAPS) of artists. Dollarwise, NYFA must operate under the same 20% administrative ceiling.

As the dust settles, the real question emerges: How will artists be affected by the changes? The only standard by which to measure NYFA's plans is CAPS itself. CAPS' artists-judging-artists and no-strings policies are held in high esteem by its constituents, and NYFA has indicated it plans to follow suit. NYFA will be an important organization to watch during the coming months as it organizes its governing board and formulates key policies for the fellowship program. —RT

**CAPSIZED**—Just as we went to press, *The Independent* learned that CAPS is folding. NYFA will now administer all the fellowships.

## SUPER-8

# Brussels Sprouts— Tips from Abroad

TONI TREADWAY & BOB BRODSKY

*Mercredi 9 Novembre, Bruxelles.* "Tell them S-8 is not dead. All the stores are saying it's done. It's terrible," lamented Brussels International Super-8 Festival director Robert Malengreau to us before our workshop. Betamovie was arriving that week in Brussels amidst much hoopla, and although the candid verdict of store personnel at week's end was that video still cannot compete with S-8 on grounds of cost, image quality, accessibility and portability, terror was in the air, again.

There was no ground for it, particularly in view of some of the exciting S-8 work projected on the large screen at Centre Culturel Jacques Franck. Filmmakers from 37 countries presented programs, but English speakers will be particularly interested in the Australian and British programs and in the market French television has opened up for American S-8 filmmakers.

Armand Ventre of Antenne 2 (France) was on the prowl at Brussels, looking for work to broadcast on his half-hour weekly show, "La Television des Telespectateurs" ("The Viewers' TV"), which has a French viewership of several million. He requires that films be two to 20 minutes long with a single soundtrack that can be appreciated by non-English speakers. Both 18 and 24 frames per second are acceptable.

### EXOTIC LOVE

The French love of exotic visuals led Ventre to one of the films we had brought with us, David Fortney's *Higher Ground*, a simple love story (no dialogue) with spectacular visuals and sensational camera tracking. It could undoubtedly play very well to audiences anywhere; every image emerges out of the preceding one (without benefit of lap dissolves).

Armand Ventre prefers fiction and animation. He will accept a S-8 print but prefers work from the original. He will accept ¾" videocassette only if it is already in the French TV standard, SECAM.

The contract that French TV is offering allows the broadcast of your film, entirely or in part, nationally and internationally, for an unlimited number of airings. For this privilege, French TV is paying \$25 per minute (200FF) for experimental and live action work and about \$32 per minute for animation. Films should be sent airmail ("without commercial value") registered with a return receipt requested to Antenne 2 La Television des

Telespectateurs, 5-7 rue de Montessuy, 75007 Paris, France.

If your film is not selected for screening, it will be returned within one month of review. If selected, it will be returned within one month of the program's airdate (which may be awhile). Reports from European participants tell us that Ventre responds promptly both in the return of films and in payments; however, one Latin American filmmaker has been waiting 18 months for both. We suggest that you state the above terms clearly in any communications you make with Ventre.



Mark Titmarsh, Australia: "The attraction of S-8 is its lean economics and veritable lack of history."

### FILMS FROM AFAR

Media arts and museum programmers should consider booking two programs that were presented at the Brussels S-8 festival: one of films by various Australian filmmakers including Mark Titmarsh, the other of works by animator Lewis Cooper of Britain. Both could travel very well among North American audiences who are generally unreceptive to S-8 work, and we would be glad to help interested programmers in scheduling and teching a screening in their cities.

Titmarsh arrived in Brussels looked fresh as an urban daisy after 38 hours in an airplane on a ticket from the Australian Film Commission. He carried with him the works of 12 other Australians as well as his own for screenings in Berlin and Venice after Brussels. Unable to see all 16 films in Titmarsh's program because of the disintegration of the Brussels screening schedule, we nevertheless saw enough to know

Photo: Bob Brodsky



of the program's interest to art audiences. The films range from a tribute to film noir to computer-aided personalisms. In the published program notes, Titmarsh writes, "The uprising of S-8 coincided with the virtual shutdown of the experimental imperative in 16mm filmmaking. Due to the phenomenal rise in stock and laboratory costs in the larger gauge only the already established, the auteur, has been able to continue. Consequently much of the energy and potential of 16mm has been inherited by S-8—though not unchanged. S-8 has had an irresistible effect on predetermined notions of film theory and practice, due particularly to the smaller gauge's characteristics of single system sound and extreme mobility . . . Many Australian S-8 filmmakers have broad visual arts backgrounds or are actively involved in other art practices. For these people the attraction of S-8 is its lean economics and its veritable lack of history. With no visible historical landmarks guiding or determining S-8 practice, it proceeds by energetic self-definition which tends in turn to an expansive inclusiveness."

#### POIGNANT & POLITE

As outrageous as the Australian vision and practice of S-8 is, so poignant and polite is the British vision presented by Lewis Cooper. But Cooper's attention to detail in his clay animations is outrageous in other ways. There is nothing like Lewis Cooper on this side of the Atlantic. The international audiences in Brussels responded time and again with teary-eyed standing ovations to screenings of his films, and the festival presented him with a special commendation. His film *The Life and Death of Joe Soap*, which follows its character from infant to lover to rejected war cripple, is a stinging commentary on the social response to heroism. In another work, *Bonzo's Last Trick*, an old magician trapped in a dying theater turns his moment of deepest despair to create (presto!) love, life and a new awakening.

Mark Titmarsh can be reached through Super-8 Film Group, 64a Wigram Road, Glebe, N.S.W. 2037, Australia. Telephone (02) 660 3003 for Titmarsh, (02) 356 4392 for Virginia Hilyard. Lewis Cooper can be reached at 18 Lovendean Lane, Lovendean Heights, Portsmouth, PO8 8HG England.

It is now possible to put together S-8 programs from many non-English-speaking filmmakers. Spanish programs should be on the road, and there are African programs (both North and sub-Saharan) that are different from the larger format work that is now well-known to American audiences. We hope that opportunities will be seized for screening these works so that audiences will grow. What have you seen of S-8 from the East? We'd like to hear from you and see more work. No monster movies, please. ■

Bob Brodsky & Toni Treadway are the authors of *Super 8 in the Video Age*, which was recently translated into Spanish. Treadway serves as a board member of the Boston Film/Video Foundation.

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## IN FOCUS

# Time for a Light Story: Color Timing Lab Literacy

DAVID LEITNER

*Pop quiz: What's the meaning of a 25-32-29 timing light?*

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Open the can or box containing color negative dailies printed by any major film lab, and inside you'll discover a list of timing light numbers like the one above. Put off screening the dailies momentarily and reach for this list, for each timing light has a story to tell. The plot revolves around exposure indices, foot-candles, filter factors, and color temperatures—and the outcome is never certain.

As you might recall from previous In Focus columns on color negative, a color negative emulsion is a layered stack of three silver halide emulsions. One each is sensitized to only red, green, or blue. In developing, a silver image is formed, then "bleached" from each emulsion, leaving in its stead a colored stain.

Each of the resulting dye layers functions as a record of the level of red, green, or blue exposure bestowed upon the color negative. If one could somehow attach a meter to each layer and take a reading, it would be evident which, if any, were overexposed or underexposed. No such meter exists, but the readings do: that's what timing lights are. Read on.

Two exposures are required to produce a positive image for projection. The filmmaker determines the first exposure by setting the iris of the lens. By striking a print from the developed negative, the laboratory makes a second exposure. While the filmmaker's exposure can range within the broad latitude of color negative, the laboratory's must be precise.

Consider, for example, an average close-up shot of a face. Maybe the filmmaker lacked a full stop in low light, maybe an 85 filter was neglected in daylight, maybe the light source was greenish fluorescent: regardless, the viewer expects a natural skintone. It falls upon the laboratory to adjust its exposures of the print to compensate for the shortcomings of the original negative.

Since the end result—in this case, a natural skintone of proper brightness—represents a constant, the laboratory's exposure must vary according to the filmmaker's. If the filmmaker overexposes, the laboratory is obliged to raise its exposure in order to penetrate the darker negative. As a result, the laboratory's exposures, expressed in timing lights, parallel the filmmaker's.

Before we continue: what, exactly, is a timing light? For that matter, what is timing? For answers, let's digress for a moment and take a

journey into the Twilight Zone of the lab printing room, 50 years ago.

## DEPRESSION STOCK SOUP

1934. Although 35mm is the standard gauge, standardization in printing machines and techniques doesn't exist. The laboratory we're visiting uses a Bell & Howell Model D continuous contact printer. Like modern contact printers, the negative and the positive raw stocks are wrapped in tight contact around a big sprocket that rotates over a rectangular aperture of light. A lamp behind the aperture exposes the raw stock.

The sprocket turns at a constant rate, and the lamp burns at a constant voltage (its color temperature is not critical; 35mm color is 15 years away). Only by varying the height of the rectangular aperture, and therefore the area that can pass light, are changes in exposure possible. This printer features a big dial with 21 positions for setting aperture size. Six of these "printer points" are equivalent to a stop of light (no matter from which end of the dial, since the scale is logarithmic).

A breathless messenger bearing 1000-foot cans of exposed negative arrives from the studio. The contents go directly into the soup. Upon developing, a "one-light" daily is struck. The printer's mid-scale position, a "number 11 light," is used to print all of the dailies. Since the studio works with a fixed



"... blizzard scene? Timer must be wearing his shades again."

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amount of lighting, the exposures are fairly consistent, and everyone's content with this arrangement.

Sometimes, however, a difficult day-for-night scene will require a special printing light. This calls for the Cinex (pronounced "sign-x") Timer. The Cinex Timer is a device that makes test exposures. The operator removes a 21-frame length of developed negative, places it in contact with a similar length of unexposed positive, and cranks it through. The Cinex Timer gives every other frame a timed exposure that matches the corresponding Bell & Howell printer point. Frames one, three, five, etc. are printed at a one-light, a three-light, a five-light, and so on. The Cinex strip, when developed, appears light on one end and dark on the other. These test exposures, a one-third stop apart, suffice to tell the printing machine operator at which printer position, or "timing light," to print the scene.

The operator of the Cinex Timer, not surprisingly, is known as "the timer." He or she has plenty to do. Some cinematographers at the studio want a Cinex strip with each daily. They like to compare the one-light to other possible timings. Then, after a film is edited and the negative roles conformed, Cinexes are used to indicate the timing lights needed for close scene-to-scene matching of print densities. This saves costly answer printing.

1984. Standardization through attrition. Not many companies make laboratory printing machines these days, and those that do utilize some version of the Bell & Howell additive color lamphouse of 1961. Its scale of 50 printer points—12 to a stop of light—has become the *de facto* industrial standard.

## TRI-COLOR TROUBLE

The Bell & Howell color lamphouse separates the spectrum of a single tungsten halogen bulb into three channels of red, green, and blue light. As it happens, a variable aperture at the printing sprocket would fail to regulate these beams individually, so placed inside the lamphouse are miniature paired barndoors that interrupt the light path of each color. In the bat of an eyelash, these "light valves" swing apart or shut down to one of 50 printer point positions. Thus measured out, the red, green, and blue beams are rechannelled into a single composite printing light at the printer's fixed-size aperture.

Remember that, unlike his/her 1934 counterpart, today's filmmaker shooting color negative exposes not one emulsion, but *three*. The ability to mix 50 printer points of red, green, and blue light in increments as fine as one-twelfth of a stop provides the laboratory with the range and precision to rectify *each* of



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## THE INDEPENDENT

the filmmaker's exposures. After all, how many trouble themselves with tri-color meters?

The eye can easily discern the finest scene-to-scene mismatches in hue (a source of frustration, which the black-and-white cinematographer, Cinex strip in hand, never encountered). With the myriad complications of mixed light sources, sunlight/skyline rations, lens coloration, filter manufacturing tolerances (need I continue?), perhaps only an in-camera tri-color meter located behind the lens and center-weighted for spot-metering would prove adequate to the task of color balancing the negative during exposure. Even if such a device were possible, it couldn't register real-world variations in batches of raw stock or laboratory processing. That's why one-light dailies are an anachronism.

Printing color dailies on the mid-scale red-green-blue light of 25-25-25 demonstrates either a nostalgia for past practice or a penchant for adversity. Given the latitude of color negative, it's not necessary; considering the effort and expense required to regiment all lighting set-ups to a mere printing light, it's just not practical—especially on a modest budget.

### NEW TIMING LITERACY

Furthermore, for the up-to-date film laboratory with video color analysis and computerized frame-count cueing, it takes just as much time to "time" each scene as it does to spool the length of the camera negative, inspect each exposure, and assign a single average printing light, mid-scale or otherwise.

A timed color daily combines the chief advantages of a Cinex strip and a tri-color meter. Although you don't get an exposure strip with each scene—25<sup>3</sup> steps (every other printing light, three colors) would require a reel of its own—you do get a chance to evaluate best image quality regardless of how the negative was exposed. This eliminates the guesswork of deciding what's usable, saves the cinematographer potential embarrassment in front of producers and crew, and makes for an even workprint.

Anyway, the timing lights, listed scene by scene, tell the full story. They reveal exactly how the red, green, and blue emulsions were exposed. To learn to "read" them is an invaluable critical skill that puts you in touch with a wealth of exposure feedback; however, you must know the following:

1) Six to seven printer points equals *your* f/stop. In an absolute sense, an increase of 12 printer points does equal a doubling of light, but color negative with an overall gamma near .5 produces only half as much density per stop of exposure. Each time you open your lens one stop, the timing lights will climb only six points. Screen contrast is restored by the print, which, with a gamma well over 2.0, inverts and stretches out the negative's compressed tonal range.

2) As you've noticed, timing lights rise with an increase in exposure to the negative. More ex-

posure creates a darker negative; the light valves have to open wider to provide adequate illumination to the unexposed print stock. And vice versa. With a decrease in exposure to the negative the timing lights fall.

3) The most significant exposure is that of the green layer, which records the band of the spectrum to which our vision is most acute. It represents 60-70% of the total detail in an image. The blue layer, at the other extreme, is almost inconsequential: it tints the image without adding strong detail. To evaluate overall exposure level, focus on the green timing light, discount the others.

4) Most labs adhere to a 25-25-25 "normal." That is, if one took the perfect meter reading of an 18% gray card at the recommended exposure index and exposed perfectly, and the lab's processing were likewise on the mark, a 25-25-25 timing light would reproduce at proper brightness a perfect neutral gray on the screen. Like all ideals, real life doesn't offer many instances of 25-25-25 light. It's a useful touchstone, though, by which to gauge relative under- and overexposure.

5) Timing lights are meaningful only insofar as the screen image appears pleasing. If your dailies come back from the lab cobalt green, the timing lights that are responsible aren't valid. It's also important that your screen matches the A.N.S.I. standard for brightness: 16-18 foot-lamberts with no film in the gate. You can easily measure this with a spot-meter calibrated in foot-lamberts. Otherwise, you and the laboratory (check their screen brightness, too!) are not going to see eye to eye on the subject of what appears pleasing.

At this point, you should be able to answer that a 25-32-29 timing light is quite nice, since the green light is a stop heavy, which makes light-craving negative very happy. ■

*David Leitner is an independent producer who works at DuArt Film Labs in NY.*

### A TITLE IS A TITLE IS A...

In the Oct. '83 issue we reported on film subtitling, and gave comparative prices for three American companies. We have recently learned that you can cut your costs by more than 50% if you are willing to send your job to Europe.

According to one reliable source, the "best in Europe" is Film Titles (also known as Color Film Center), Leeghwaterstraat 5, The Hague, The Netherlands. They can reportedly subtitle your first 16mm print for approximately \$1,000, with each additional print costing about \$350. The "cheapest in Europe" (with some loss in quality) is Grafilme, Rua de S. Jose 203-2°, 1200 Lisbon, Portugal; tel: 54 31 52/54 30 98, Attn: Sr. Sobral. Recommended translator: Ana Freitash. We were told they can do your first print for the incredible price of \$500. You may even save enough by going there and supervising the job yourself! Two other companies recommended in Lisbon are Matra Films and Ulisseia Films. No addresses available.



# All Dressed Up & No Place to Show

At the international INPUT conference, TV programmers trade ideas about innovative programming, but they can't always put those ideas into the schedule.

WANDA BERSHEN

The "global village"—at least the one where everyone was supposed to get equal time—doesn't seem to be happening. American commercial TV's domination of the world market with shows like *Dallas*, *Kojak* and *I Love Lucy* results in a distinctly impoverished view of America abroad. Meanwhile the paucity of programming from other countries available here may go down in history as a prime example of splendid (media) isolation at its most foolhardy.

In 1973, concern about this imbalance led to a Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored meeting of American and foreign public television personnel on the "International Exchange of Cultural Programming." Those discussions resulted, in 1978, in the establishment of INPUT—an annual week-long conference devoted to the viewing and discussion of some 70 to 80 hours of programming (about 75% by non-Americans) by public television producers and programmers from around the globe. While distinctly *not* a market, INPUT's purpose is to improve the opportunities for international program exchange and to "increase the understanding of the impact of television programs on the people of all places." With these purposes in mind, the organizers seek the most innovative and provocative programs for the conference's screenings and discussions.

Unfortunately, these kinds of foreign programs rarely make it into either the local or national PBS schedule. The enthusiasm of American programmers for the programs they see at INPUT doesn't translate into action at home. Consider two programs produced by NDR of Hamburg, shown at INPUT in 1982 and 1983 respectively. *Twilight*, by the Dutch theater group Het Werkteater, originated as a stage piece drawn in part from interviews with the residents of an old people's home. The videotaped version is carefully conceived for television as a medium with its own characteristics; the result is a spare, scripted dramatic narrative performed with virtually no props, costumes or set decor in one 63-minute camera take. A very different piece, *The Axe of Wandsbek*, intercuts documentary sections in color with highly stylized dramatic sequences in black and

white to tell the story of a 1938 Communist uprising in Hamburg whose leaders were executed by Nazi sympathizers. Woven throughout are explorations of the town's social history, while the program addresses questions of reality and truth in both form and content.

## VIEWER COMFORT OR OTHER VISIONS?

It isn't surprising that programs like these have a rough time getting past American programmers. They are quite complex in formal design, slowly paced, focused investigations of social history and personal responsibility hardly designed for viewer comfort. This combination of stylistic approach and program topic is not common on any kind of American TV, including PBS, whose programming is largely conventional. This seems, however, to be a systemic (and not unpredictable) failing, given the problematic structure and wholly inadequate funding of the entire public broadcasting system, as detailed in the Carnegie Commission's 1979 "A Public Trust."

The report remarks on the universal difficulty of developing controversial or innovative programming in a system with "so many different and sometimes conflicting decision makers." It also observes how reliance upon underwriters, particularly for new program development, "reduces the system's discretion" as to what gets made. "A Public Trust" further acknowledges public TV's structural inability to take many programming risks, risks it describes as "absolutely vital for creative programming"—and risks which the BBC and other European systems have explored in considerably greater degree over several decades.

Attendance at INPUT encourages a consideration of the differences in programming options, histories and purposes. One gets a tantalizing glimpse of what things might be like were an American cultural policy to offer serious support to a broadcasting system which could afford to be "public" in a manner familiar on the European systems.



Shirley Clarke's "Tongues" (Photo: Bruce Hadgens)

## LACK OF COMMERCIAL CONTEXT A PLUS

Public broadcastings systems in France, Germany, England, Italy, Holland and Sweden have been supported at far higher per capita dollar amounts than Americans have ever dreamed of, through a combination of government allocations and license fees to the public. They have thus been free from the pressure of advertising and ratings. Of equal importance, these systems, unlike ours, have been able to devise programming and policy without having to compete against a massive and thoroughly entrenched commercial industry. This has allowed them to at least aspire to be genuinely educational—an enterprise which should be defined by its success in stretching audience expectations and knowledge. Despite the clear differences in our media environment, it is hard to imagine that American audiences require such thorough protection from the unfamiliar as many TV programmers would have us believe.

Discussions at INPUT often generate sharp differences, and the conference has always been structured to maximize participants' encounters with new ideas and new people. Now in its sixth year, INPUT is run by an 18-member international board of public TV professionals, presently including one CPB and four American station representatives. From 1978-82, programming was chosen by one European (Sergio Borelli of Italian RAI) and one American (Barbara van Dyke). For 1983 and 1984 that procedure has been changed, although the charge to program provocative and innovative material has not. Program submissions are now pre-screened by each country's board representative; then the entire group of people who will act as discussion leaders during the conference choose the final selections. This year American pre-selection was done by Joyce Campbell (WETA-TV, Washington DC), Michael Mears (WCCB-TV, Maine) and Jennifer Lawson (CPB, Washington DC). Both now and in the past,

Above photo:

Joe Chaikin performs in *Tongues*, which was produced at the Women's Interart Center and was shown at INPUT. The Center later brought a selection of INPUT programs to New York for a symposium.



programs made by American independents have represented a good 30% of the average 20 of American programming. (In 1984 there will be five independent programs out of 16 ones). INPUT also offers special sessions on current topics; last year the British and French Fourth Channels spoke about their new roles.

The conference alternates each year between an American and a European site. In 1984, there will be about 400 delegates; producers whose work is being shown are eligible for subsidies to attend, and each public TV station may choose to send additional delegates. Observers are welcome, and both media center directors and other interested parties have come, sometimes for a partial visit of two or three days. The Rockefeller Foundation contributes \$50-60,000 annually for travel subsidies, while the actual costs of the conference are covered by member organizations. For the first time this year, CPB offered 30 stipends to encourage the attendance of more women and minorities (largely from within the ranks of PTV). Independents who have supplied programming to public TV are also eligible.

Courtesy TV Lab/Photo: Peter Muller



Robert Wilson's *Deafman's Glance* is the sort of innovative video favored at INPUT discussions.

Another initiative of the past two years has been the soliciting of greatly increased INPUT participation by Third World countries. This year there will be an increased number of African, Asian and Eastern European delegates. For all these efforts, however, American acquisitions and broadcasts of programs like those screened at INPUT are hardly ever overwhelming.

Meanwhile, foreign producers, willing to offer their programs at relatively low cost, should be able to find an interested segment of the American public. There is an audience of several million people here which in fact supports a very respectable non-profit exhibition circuit throughout the country. Programs of unusual film, video and television work, often with accompanying speakers, are regularly scheduled by arts, cultural, educational and special interest groups concerned with the environment, health care and other issues hardly confined to national boundaries.

Many of us in the independent media community would like to see more such innovative programming in different parts of the country. Although media centers can't deliver audiences in the millions, as public TV might, we can participate with media-producing colleagues from abroad in productive cultural exchanges. These might, in fact, prepare the ground for an enlightened public awareness of the many visions, very different from our own, which the citizenry of a true "global village" must be able to see and hear.

*Wanda Bershen is the director of the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers.*

## UPDATE: SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

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*If you're interested in taking your film to theaters open to independent work in the South and you'd like a current as well as accurate listing of such, then destroy page 27 of your January/February issue of THE INDEPENDENT and use the following:*

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PO Box 3312  
Tampa, FL 33601

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Atlanta, GA 30324

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Attn: Cinematic Arts Committee  
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University of South Carolina  
Columbia, SC 29208

Attn: Sue Metzger  
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# The Case of the Well-Mannered Guest

*Outsiders tend to become insiders when studying their subjects closely. An essay on the problems this poses for ethnographic filmmakers.*

PAULINE SPIEGEL

More and more ethnographic films are being made not in foreign places but here in the United States. Filmmakers are portraying a wide range of subjects from major ethnic groups to the most exotic members of the subcultures within our society. While their topics differ, most of these filmmakers are concerned with the relationship between filmmaker and subject. The long hours independents spend interacting with their subjects are more than a matter of filmmaking technique: for most ethnographic filmmakers, capturing the nuances of culture and behavior is a matter of ethics, part of their responsibility to their subjects. But that very concern exacts a certain intellectual and aesthetic price, paid in the finished film.

Documentary filmmakers did not always stress interacting with their subjects. In the earlier days of documentary cinema, the filmmaker's ideal was a detached and exclusively observational attitude, expressed by the saying "fly on the wall." Documentarist Ricky Leacock has described how, perfectly still and partly hidden behind a couch, he caught John F. Kennedy making an important phone call for his pioneering 1960 film, *Primary*. But

things have changed. In 1982 Leacock told an audience at the Margaret Mead Anthropological Film Festival about his relationship with a Christian fundamentalist family he had filmed: "When I spoke to them on the phone [after I left] they said, 'Ricky, we miss the cornbread you used to bake for us.'" The audience chuckled its approval.

Often the sense of relationship goes even deeper. Tony de Nonno's *It's One Family, Knock on Wood*, deals with a family of Sicilian puppeteers living in New York. The family builds large, beautifully detailed puppets, and performs multi-part medieval epics with them. The film stresses the continuity and cooperation between generations in preserving a valuable craft tradition. When de Nonno speaks of his relationship to the puppeteers, he says, "I felt like a member of the family." The same thoughts are echoed by many other filmmakers.

## FILMMAKER AS POLITE GUEST

In many ways, *It's One Family* represents a generation of such films. They are serious, effective and affecting. Yet they are also limited in their impact. Watching them, one senses that something is missing, that more could be

said, that they show us less than they could. What characterizes many of these films is a sense of politeness, of reticence towards their subject. It's the politeness of the frequent, privileged guest. For Tony de Nonno, as for many others, to challenge his subjects would have been to betray the intimacy they had granted to him as an outsider.

Yet the position of the filmmaker as stranger is key. It sets the terms of the relationship, it determines the process of filmmaking, and it influences the nature of the finished film.

It also gives to the filmmaker, as it does to the academic anthropologist, the security of a well-defined role. And so ethnographic filmmakers in the United States have chosen subjects as foreign as possible to the mostly middle class, mostly white, mostly urban filmmaker and audience. Sometimes the subjects are unfamiliar because they are geographically isolated. For example, David Hancock's 1971 *Chester Grimes* follows a farmer who lives deep in the New England forest, one of the last to log the woods with a horse. Other filmmakers concentrate on people who participate in esoteric rituals. The people in Karen Kramer's *Jolo Serpent Handlers* prove



Adrienne Weiss

A participant observer at work. "Ethnographic filmmakers are judged, to a large extent, on the skill with which they become insiders in the society where they work."



their Christian fundamentalist faith by holding snakes when they worship. Ethnicity, of course, is a great boundary marker, and so we have films on Haitian, Russian, Finnish, Jewish, even WASP-Americans.

These subjects are typically anthropological, however, not simply because they are exotic. The filmmakers, like anthropologists, choose to work on subjects largely in the private domain, where strangers, much less strangers burdened with filmmaking equipment, may not be welcome. The problem for both academic anthropologists and filmmakers is first, how to cross these lines of privacy and second, how to understand the unfamiliar events which confront them in a strange environment. The answer to both these questions is a process called "participant observation," a kind of dedicated, alert hanging-out. The method involves talking to subjects and observing events in the hope of gaining admission to more sensitive areas and more intimate (and reliable) information. For filmmakers it is especially important that subjects feel at ease with all the paraphernalia of filming. So ethnographic filmmakers, like academic anthropologists, are judged, to a large extent, on the skill with which they become insiders in the societies where they work. The filmmaker's claim to be "a member of the family" is not only a comfortable fact, it's a claim to legitimacy.

Much of *Jolo Serpent Handlers*, for example, occurs in the public domain. The church service where the worshippers handle snakes (and speak in tongues and fall down, slain by the spirit) is public. Access is no trick. But when one of the handlers is seriously bitten, the camera follows his family home, the filmmaker participating in the family's vigil as it waits to see if his faith will keep the handler alive. Their tolerance for the camera at such an extended, delicate moment is proof of the confidence that the people of Jolo had in Kramer. She had shown them, Kramer says, that she "had her heart in it." They trusted that she would not misrepresent them.

But that trust implies a responsibility, an ethical imperative not to betray. The responsibility is heightened by considerations which stem, once again, from the choice of whom to film. The filmmakers tend to focus on marginal peoples who are relatively powerless and voiceless. Ethnographic filmmakers are acutely conscious of how much their position conforms to colonial power relationships.

#### A QUID PRO QUO—PR TRADE-OFF?

Some filmmakers feel that this responsibility can be fulfilled by a kind of contractual *quid pro quo*. George Stoney said in a recent issue of *Afterimage*: "When I go to somebody with my camera and microphone and I say, 'Look, give me your soul,' I've got to be able

to say 'Look, it's going to help you, not hurt you.'" Not all filmmakers are as activist as Stoney, who has made a concentrated effort to use his films to promote dialogue between underrepresented groups and government bureaucracy. For the most part, all that's expected is a vague public relations benefit. Says Karen Kramer, "The people of Jolo wanted to see the film done partly because it's their religion to spread the gospel, but partly because they were upset because they'd been misquoted before. They thought that film would have to show them the way they were. I felt committed to presenting them in a positive light."

What this implies is an agreement, stated or unstated, with the subjects to produce a film that shows the subjects the way they see themselves. There is some precedent for this in academic anthropology. Many anthropologists have stressed the importance of studying and recording the subject's own perspectives, their world views and values, their thoughts and feelings. From this point of view, the key to understanding what people do lies in understanding how they *think* about what they do. And there is a political point in allowing people to express their own viewpoints. This approach is reflected in a series of recent films which consist primarily of people talking about themselves: Pat Ferrero's *Quilts in Women's Lives*, for example, is constructed around several women voicing their thoughts about quilts and quilting. In an anthropological context rather than an investigative one, to challenge what people say about themselves would be not just impolite but pointless.

A corollary and equally humanitarian concern is a wish to present the films' subjects as "whole people" who live full and coherent lives. This is expressed not just in the attitude filmmakers take towards their subjects but also in the way they construct their films. Above all, ethnographic filmmakers aim to avoid fragmenting the audience's perception of the subject. Carefully sequenced, long running, deep focus, wide angle shots are preferred to montage, which, quite literally, breaks up the scene.

So anthropologists have objected to Trinh T. Minh-ha's recent *Reassemblage* not because of the film's outspoken anti-anthropological bias, but because the film's montage picks the images apart. And because it does not reassemble the pieces into anything the audience can recognize as a whole, the film, it is claimed, fails in its responsibility to its human subjects. Thus a stylistic conservatism is built into the anthropological filmmaker's sense of ethics.

Though motivated by the very best of reasons, filmmakers have in effect imposed upon themselves a series of rules governing style as well as content. The responsibilities generated by the relationship between filmmaker and subject imply a set of limitations. The implicit contract between the filmmaker and the subject leads to self-censorship. Many

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filmmakers simply refuse, on ethical grounds, to include anything which may make the subject look bad. Some filmmakers rationalize the issue of self-censorship by claiming that they only work on subjects about which they have positive feelings. They claim to have no wish or reason to show negative or unflattering material. But that choice is in itself a constrictor.

Such films also have a tendency to be intellectually cautious. When subjects speak entirely for themselves, the filmmaker speaks little. If the filmmaker does intervene, it is usually to provide a context for the events on the screen, not to analyze them. Though these films tell us about other people's values and world views, the how and why of cultural process is left unstated. If there are conclusions to be drawn from the material, the audience is left on its own to draw them. This demands an extraordinarily alert, educated and thoughtful audience—or else a class of social science students.

Documentary films which do analyze cultural processes are often explicitly political. Connie Field's *Rosie the Riveter*, for example, shows how women were recruited into the work force in great numbers during World War II. The media of the day—using popular songs, posters and newsreels—helped propagate the idea of a female workforce. After the war, the same media explained how and why women should cheerfully give up their jobs. In demonstrating how the media influenced people's attitudes, the film shows how ideas affect their behavior. The film can be so explicit partly because it is partisan. On one side stand working women, who are treated with the care and respect due to subjects. On the other side are the government, media, employers and some men, who are treated with irony and derision.

One way for documentarians to overcome the limitations implied in the outsider role is to work ever more closely with the groups they film, generating analysis within the group. A second possibility is for insiders to begin making films about themselves. But pressures from within the group may also narrow the options of insider/filmmakers. At a recent FACE (Folk Arts for Communication and Education) conference, some delegates argued that it is sometimes necessary to exclude from a film a ritual such as female adolescent circumcision because it would prove shocking to a foreign audience, regardless of the context.

Everyone involved in filmmaking—subject and filmmaker—brings his or her own hopes, fears and expectations to a film. But the challenge to both outsiders looking in and insiders looking in is to balance the responsibility of sympathy with the responsibility of honest interpretation. ■

*Pauline Spiegel is an independent filmmaker (The Gold Pit) and freelance writer. She has a master's degree in anthropology and a long-standing interest in ethnographic film.*

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# The Theatrical Track From Courtship to Contract

Indies are negotiating more distribution pick-ups these days. What do you win, what do you lose when you go with one of the established distributors or classics divisions?

RENEE TAJIMA



George Nierenberg's *Say Amen, Somebody* is only slowly reaching Black audiences because its distributor, UA Classics, concentrated on art houses. But the distributor was helpful in setting up a record deal.

While independents have tasted the joys and sorrows of barnstorming, four-wall, and collective distribution, they are only starting to assess the performance of established distributors and the majors' new classics divisions. *The Independent* surveyed a small cross-section of films which have been picked up by distributors for American theatrical release to spotlight the issues facing independents as they go to market. (Note that this investigation excludes films produced for the American Playhouse series—the subject of an upcoming article.)

An established distributor offers expertise and contacts that can give you access to valuable theatrical and telecast markets. And the filmmaker, of course, provides the product. But this symbiosis of interests can evolve into a power relationship more complicated than the natural tension between business partners who are counting on profits from the same

pie. What's the split of the take? Who pays for prints and publicity? Who calls the shots?

The distributor's assets are tangible. Its annual earnings are X dollars, its catalogue includes X films which have been distributed to X theaters in X number of territories. And huge multinationals may back it (Coca-Cola owns Columbia, which owns Triumph). On the other hand, your film is likely to be a first feature in an untested market, even if it has good potential and good notices—intangibles unlikely to easily sway investors. But don't underestimate or underutilize your own bargaining currency in hammering out the distribution relationship from courtship through contract negotiations to the actual marketing process.

For an independent, choosing a distributor is like an agency's search for adoptive parents. As George Nierenberg, director of *Say Amen, Somebody*, points out, "Ul-

timately, when you hand your film over to the distributor it's their film—it's not yours anymore. They're the ones who have to run with it and decide what to do." Therefore tough questions are in order. Does the distributor have sufficient working capital to strike prints and push the film? Does it have pull with exhibitors? Is the company experienced in handling similar types of films and does it understand that the distribution of studio-produced pictures and art films involves different strategies and sensitivities?

But first, they have to want your "baby."

## THE DISTRIBUTOR DATING GAME

What kind of films have caught the eye of established distributors? With the exception of *El Norte* and *Chan Is Missing*, minority directors have not fared well. Nor have women directors, who have otherwise forged a solid presence in independent filmmaking. (Although surprisingly enough, Sara Risher, vice president of production and acquisitions at New Line deemed Susan Seidelman's feature *Smithereens* marketable because it is the product of a woman director.) Despite a few documentary distribution successes, notably *Harlan County, USA* and *The Atomic Cafe*, dramatic features still attract the most industry interest.

The search for a distributor is most likely to be the effort to attract one, unless you have a particularly hot property which is being sought after. Distributors rarely come to see a picture cold at a filmmaker's invitation, particularly if the director or the film does not have name recognition. If by chance distributor execs do come to your screening, they may wait for further reinforcement before making an offer. Libra and other distributors first saw *Home Free All* at director Stewart Bird's own screenings, but did not make any commitments. After the Montreal Film Festival and a positive *Variety* review, the distributors asked to see it. "I told them they'd already seen it," Bird recalled somewhat sardonically. This time Libra made an offer and Bird signed on.

Good timing is essential. A major festival screening and its accompanying prizes and reviews can grab distributor attention and up the value of your bargaining currency. The meteoric rise from obscurity of Wayne Wang's *Chan Is Missing* after a Vincent Canby review of the New Directors/New Film Series in the *New York Times* is now legendary. Wang suddenly got offers "from practically everybody," including UA Classics and Paramount, before he finally chose to go with New Yorker.

Distributors first heard about *Say Amen, Somebody* at the Telluride Film Festival. "I had the choice to wait longer and take the risk of doing well at the New York Film Festival," Nierenberg explained, "so I hedged my bets and *did* do well there, strengthening my position with the distributors." Nierenberg signed with UA Classics. While negotiating with Libra Cinema 5, Pierce and Kevin Rafferty

Courtesy UA Classics



and Jayne Loader, the producers of *The Atomic Cafe*, opened it for two weeks at the Film Forum in New York, where it became the theater's all-time top grossing film. "To a certain extent [Ben] Barenholtz [president of Libra Cinema 5—see accompanying interview] was waiting to see what the audience at the Film Forum would be like. The Film Forum run put us in a stronger position," recalls Pierce Rafferty.

### SPENDING \$\$ TO GET \$\$

If you are not inclined to wheeling and dealing, a sales agent can handle the dirty work. For Cannes, Susan Seidelman contracted with Affinity Enterprises, which represented her in signing with New Line. Robert Jones hired Michael Goldberg as a producers' representative for *Mission Hill* at the Independent Feature Market. But while some directors leave the negotiating to producers and others cut the deal themselves, all consult attorneys.

According to Robert Freedman, partner in the entertainment firm Rosenblum & Freedman, attorney's fees vary. "Some clients can do a lot of the work themselves. Then it would be \$250 or so to just have a lawyer review the contract and give an opinion. But sometimes the contract can look like a lease, so a lot of points may need to be negotiated." He cites \$1,000 as a lowside figure for a more complex negotiation. "It depends on the scope of the deal too. If it's a small film with a small advance the lawyer will have to make the fee more realistic." Freedman suggests calling other filmmakers for suggestions on lawyers just as you might call around for crews. (See Freedman's article "Square Deal: Choosing a Distributor," *The Independent*, December, 1982.)

Just getting to the point of contracting to make money can mean spending money. On top of lawyer's fees come other costs: screenings, initial prints, shipping to festivals and publicity. These immediate financial pressures may limit one's bargaining strength. Seidelman contracted with Affinity in a hasty exchange of \$25,000 to do a 35mm blow-up of *Smithereens* so it could qualify for the Cannes official competition. Bird signed with Libra in part because it offered him a good advance which he needed to pay his Screen Actors Guild cast and his crew for deferred costs—a situation not unfamiliar to independents. The fate of the undercapitalized independent is something like that of the little investor who must sell off equity prematurely to pay for rent—one may end up sacrificing long-term gains in the process.

### NERVE-WRACKING CORPORATE SHAKE-UPS

A major concern for independents is avoiding treatment as a small, forgotten fish in a pool of many big fish. Stan Warnow, co-director of the documentary *In Our Hands*, said, "Libra turned out to be a good

distributor for us because they're not so huge that they'll take a limited marketing film and forget about it, but not so small that they don't have an infrastructure to market it."

But the variables in this filmmaker-distributor balancing act can change unexpectedly. Several filmmakers complained of the deleterious effects and depersonalization caused by corporate shake-ups. "All these large corporations are fraught with the problem of changeovers," explained Nierenberg, who has had to deal with two changes of administration at UA Classics since he signed in 1982. Most of the sales force he signed on with left before the film was even released. "Every time some new people come in you have to start with them from scratch," he continued. "They don't know anything about

theatrical, foreign and domestic, television and cable sales, or any portion thereof. Advances vary widely, from nothing at all to *El Norte*'s reported quarter of a million. One would assume that the advance depends on the degree of risk to the distributor. But the 65-minute *City News*, quite a gamble because of its short length, received what filmmaker David Fishelson called an advance he's "very happy with" from Cinecom International for theatrical distribution, while *Smithereens* and *Say Amen, Somebody* received advances the filmmakers did not regard as substantial. Said Seidelman, "At the time the film hadn't opened yet so we didn't know what would happen. I was happy to get any agreement. Both myself and New Line were surprised with its success. Had I known [it would do



Stewart Bird & Peter Beliso

*Home Free All* attracted attention from Libra after a positive *Variety* review, but has yet to obtain the distributor's promised 15-city release.

the film." *Mission Hill*'s release momentum was slowed when Atlantic Releasing became preoccupied with its own production of *Alphabet City*, directed by Amos Poe. The producers of *The Atomic Cafe* were unhappy with the loss of attention when Libra was bought by Almi, a larger company. "It's easier to lose track of how the film is doing now, and harder to get reporting on gross, net rentals, where the film has played," said Pierce Rafferty. "It's hard for me to get figures on anything now."

### BOTTOM LINES

Of course, in the final analysis, the most important factor in choosing a distributor is the bottom line offer. The standard money deal is a 50-50 or 60-40 split on the gross after costs, with filmmakers signing off all or part of the rights, including theatrical and non-

well] I would have used it as leverage to get an advance."

But other matters being equal, filmmakers may also rely on more subjective criteria in choosing their distributor. Why did Wang go with New Yorker? "Because they had pictures of all the great directors on the wall. Actually it was a gut-level thing, not logical. I liked everyone."

### MARKETING STRATEGIES

Most of the filmmakers surveyed did not expect their American theatrical release to be a major source of profits. Fishelson considers it "icing on the cake," and anticipates better returns from television sales, including an American Playhouse public television broadcast. After two full years, the producers of *The Atomic Cafe* said they have netted approximately \$250,000 and paid their debts.



Seidelman has broken even on *Smithereens* from box office sales after all the costs of theatrical release—but expects to generate money on the cable sales which began at the end of 1983.

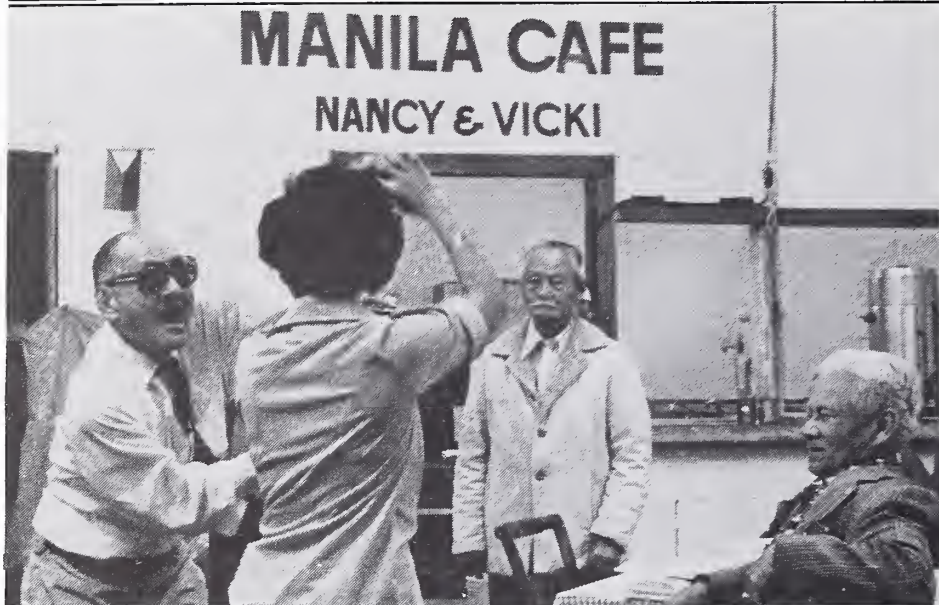
But a theatrical release means publicity and momentum. A New York opening is almost *de rigueur* for art films, which is rightly or wrongly the classification for almost any independent feature. (And for those who dream of an Academy Award nomination, a minimum one-week run in Los Angeles must be obtained.) While New York may not reflect or determine the tastes of millions of Americans from Oregon to Vermont, it can determine what they will be reading about. New York

theaters. "Pan-Canadian [owner of the Canadian rights] put it in a cineplex theater in Toronto where people go to see John Travolta films, and it did poorly." Like *Smithereens*, *Mission Hill* faced a short run at Boston's Beacon Hill theater, part of the huge Sack Theater chain, even though it is a small-scale local production. Both filmmakers would have preferred screenings at specialty theaters in Cambridge, with its huge university population and, in fact, Atlantic will open *Mission Hill* there in late February. Seidelman believes it is worth getting involved in a film's theatrical placement, and warns that an indie film can get stuck in an inappropriate theater by the distributor as part of a package deal.

fulfill two exhibition promises Wang had made with early supporters of the film—the Asian American Film Festival and the Collective for Living Cinema. Wang stepped in for both groups to secure their screenings.

As for *Say Amen*, it too has not gotten to one of its director's intended audiences: the Black community. "The film has never played in a Black theater because UA Classics' strength is in art houses." Nierenberg has persisted in arguing for a Black theatrical release, and has worked with UA Classics on special promotions in Black churches, a benefit for the NAACP, and a concert and screening at the Rikers Island prison facility. For both Wang and Nierenberg, the bargaining did not stop when the ink dried on the contract.

Some filmmakers have been able to secure guarantees on the number of playdates during a specific time period. Jones' contract with Atlantic Releasing stipulated openings in two markets within six months for *Mission Hill*. But while Libra promised a 15-city release to *Home Free All* within the first year after opening, there still has been no initial release, much to the filmmaker's chagrin. (However, Barenholtz indicated to *The Independent* that the film would open in Seattle in March prior to a New York run.)



San Francisco-based filmmaker Wayne Wang worked with his distributor New Yorker Films right through the launching of *Chan Is Missing*.

## IMAGE PROCESSING

The promotion budget is yet another balancing act. Filmmakers want to see adequate monies spent on publicity, but realize that the costs will cut into profits. New Line has spent \$50,000 on *Smithereen's* New York opening, and a couple hundred thousand in total. "We didn't want to overspend with a little film like that and tried to keep costs down to the bone," explained Risher. But the level of spending suited Seidelman, who lent a hand in the extensive grassroots campaign of leaflets and postcards.

Most filmmakers found their distributors open to ideas about publicity and promotion. Libra went with the graphics already developed by the producers of *In Our Hands*, and Atlantic Releasing used the ad campaign created by Jones and his production company, Still Run Films. UA Classics helped Nierenberg put together a record deal on *Say Amen*, although he had initial problems with their choice of image to represent the film (a still of the Barrett sisters, who are lead characters in this film about gospel singers). "It had a *Dreamgirls* quality. Perhaps a less literal image might have been better. They didn't want the film to look like a 'Black film' or a documentary, but they chose an image that was Black and documentary-like," said Nierenberg. UA has since deleted the still and switched to a title treatment.

The producers of *The Atomic Cafe* hired David Fenton as a publicist to coordinate with the various local publicists from theaters across the country, and Libra assumed a percentage of Fenton's costs. The Raffertys

openings generated national press for *Chan Is Missing* and *Smithereens*, and launched the momentum which took both films across the country. (According to Risher, *Smithereens* has had at least 250 playdates nationwide.) Bad press can also check that all-important momentum in the starting blocks; Paul Smart of the Independent Feature Project cited bad New York press as leading to the demise of David Burton Morris' *Purple Haze* in its first release.

But *Purple Haze's* problems may be as much a function of an inappropriate release strategy as bad press. According to Morris, Triumph (the classics division of Columbia Pictures) "treated it like an art film, but it's a kids' film. The 57th Street Playhouse was the wrong theater. It should have opened up in [Greenwich] Village or in [New York City's] boroughs." Producer Thomas Fucci thought it should have been opened in the Midwest, where the film is set, and then moved out to the coasts.

Similarly, Seidelman blamed *Smithereen's* poor performance in Boston and Toronto on her distributor's bookings at the wrong

## THE RIGHT STUFF

When an indie is opened at a strategic theater, the results can be hot and even pioneering. New Line premiered *Smithereens* in Greenwich Village's Waverly Theater, which had previously exhibited second-run features. The film held at the Waverly for 18 weeks and opened the door to playing other American independents there, including *The Atomic Cafe* and *Liquid Sky*. Seattle has also emerged as a new premiere city for independents. According to Bird, "Seattle is an interesting test market for indies. *The Return of the Secaucus 7* opened there, and *Northern Lights* did well."

Placing a film in the right theater is all a function of shaping its marketing image. "I felt my responsibility wasn't finished until the film was launched," explained Wang, who worked closely with New Yorker's advertising and marketing campaign for *Chan* during its inception. "For a month and a half I was at their office almost every day. I wanted to make sure the film was marketed correctly."

However, New Yorker was reluctant to



and Loader also produced a highly effective 15-minute sample reel on ¾" cassette which was mailed out to local news stations. "We got the equivalent of millions of dollars in television ads for free," said Pierce Rafferty. Clips were shown on "20-20," the "CBS Nightly News" and numerous other local and national programs with the credit line, "From the movie *The Atomic Cafe*."

For *Purple Haze*, Triumph's initial promotional outlays were deemed inadequate by director Morris. "They needed more ads. They didn't do radio spots, or TV. We should have had an album come out. . . . Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane, Dusty Springfield, whoever was around in the 60s is in the film." Undaunted, Triumph will soon try a new strategy, marketing *Purple Haze* more as a youth film with a different print campaign and radio spots. At Morris' request they have hired Jeff Down, the marketing consultant for *The Grey Fox* and *Heart Like a Wheel*.

Libra Cinema 5 capitalized on the social currency afforded by the anti-nuclear themes of *The Atomic Cafe* and *In Our Hands*. According to Andrew Lamy, director of sales for the theatrical division, "Any political film is all grassroots work. To spend money on ads is ridiculous—get the newspapers to work for you. What's important for a documentary is not the promotion budget but what you're doing for it." Libra will rely on celebrities such as Pete Seeger and Roy Scheider who appeared in *In Our Hands* to generate free publicity from talk show spots and the like. It will also follow a strategy similar to that of *The Atomic Cafe*, using word-of-mouth and local support. According to Pierce Rafferty, "Andrew was good in getting local initiatives to promote the film the 50's way," including a "fall in, fall out party" in Kansas City, and special screenings in Congress and the British Parliament.

Independents who sign on with established distributors may find themselves in the same catalogue with Francois Truffaut. Flattering as that is, you'll have to ask yourself whether that distributor is right for you. An independent may end up overshadowed by the other films of a distribution heavy. But opening your film to new audiences and new sources of income may also be the way of realizing the dream of having one's feature story seen and heard.

#### VARIETY REPORTED . . .

The classics divisions of the five majors have already contracted 30 films to be released during 1984, according to *Variety*. The five divisions—Triumph Films (Columbia), Orion Classics, United Artists Classics, 20th Century-Fox Classics and Universal Classics—are subsidiaries of the major production-distribution studios which account for about 90% of the total US box office sales. The *Variety* report also pointed out that this 30-film tally does not include 1983 indie productions which have not yet signed with a distributor.

## Distributor Calls It "A Power Game"

SUSAN LINFIELD

Distributor Ben Barenholtz is the president of Libra Cinema 5 (now part of Almi Pictures). His activities in independent film distribution and exhibition span 20 years. From 1965-67 Barenholtz managed the Village Theater (subsequently the Fillmore East), a meeting-place for performers, poets, artists and radicals on the Lower East Side. During the late sixties and early seventies he owned the Elgin, a major exhibitor of "underground" films in New York and the pioneer of the midnight show. In 1972 Barenholtz formed Libra distributors. Along with *El Topo*, the Elgin's first midnight show, Barenholtz is also credited with "discovering" such films as *Eraserhead*, *Asparagus*, *Cousin*, *Cousine* and *The Return of the Secaucus 7*.

**SUSAN LINFIELD:** How and why did the midnight shows start?

**BEN BARENHOLTZ:** For a couple of years I had been thinking that the whole system of opening films in New York was very bad for offbeat or unusual films that did not have broad public support, but could have a narrow audience. So they started as a method of opening films that could reach that narrow audience, but could also be economical.

After seeing *El Topo* I convinced its owners that if they opened it in the normal manner the critics would kill it and they'd be dead in two days. So they said, "OK, we'll let you open at midnight." The experts in the business said, "Who the hell's gonna come see a film at midnight? Besides, you have no [ad] campaign." I said, "I don't want a campaign." The total advertising budget was \$24.00 per week, which paid for a little ad in the [*Village Voice*] which just said "EL TOPO AT MIDNIGHT." They said, "What about critics?" I said, "I don't want to screen it for critics, I don't want reviews—this is previews." Within its first week it started selling out. By the second month the limos were pulling up.

We showed films at the Elgin like *Pink Flamingos*, *The Harder They Come* . . . But they weren't referred to as "independent" films at that time; they were "underground," "experimental," "avant-garde."

**SL:** It seems from the standpoint of American independent filmmakers that major distribution companies, and also some smaller companies, are increasingly picking up their films. I'm talking about

the low-budget film: *The Atomic Cafe*, John Sayles, *Chan Is Missing* . . . Is that wishful thinking or is this in fact a trend?

**BB:** Well, I don't see any particular trend. Most of those films were not picked up by majors. And if you're talking about the classics divisions: they're another fad. They're on the way out—as they were from the day they started. They're not viable. I've always warned independent filmmakers against the classics divisions. They're such a minor part of the company [that owns them] that they are not capable of handling a small, low-budget film that needs careful attention. A company can't do the big films it needs to survive and those small films too. When a United Artists has a debt of, say, \$100 million, and the classics division makes a million dollars—it's meaningless. They're not going to devote the time and energy that's needed.

Actually, the classics divisions have changed. UA Classics, which was the most prominent, has moved to California, and they've come under the control of their general sales manager. And any classics division that is not autonomous is nonsense: You cannot use your branches and your regular sales force and still call yourself a classics division. The only one I see right now that's still properly run is Orion; it still has a measure of independence.

But I think the classics divisions are missing the boat entirely about independent filmmaking in relation to the majors. The classics should never be thought of as profit centers, but rather as talent development centers. There's a tremendous amount of talent out there. The European art film is essentially atrophied, dead; it's turned into pretense. It's *here* that the art film is being made. So if they had any sense, instead of thinking about making money off of independents, they should support these people as a development of future talent that they could [later] utilize in the mainstream. (Because we know, no matter what they say, that most independent filmmakers would still love to do a Hollywood film. They'd sell out in a minute!)

Of course, what the classics divisions did manage to do is hike up the prices on films, to the point where they're not economical [to distribute]. And they're finding this out. I think in the long run the classics have harmed the independent filmmaker.

(continued on page 26)



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## FESTIVALS

# Locarno: A Leopard By the Lake

JACQUELINE LEGER

The Locarno International Film Festival could be just the place for filmmakers seeking a subtropical climate, a romantic lakeside setting, Italian charm, Swiss efficiency and lots of films. Although the emphasis is on new directors/new films, the selection committee seems to be bogged down with diplomacy and adheres to United Nations standards. As a result, one can only expect to find one to three spots open per country and too many filmmakers to fill them. Festival director David Streiff intends to encourage the 15 "independents" chosen for the competition by offering adequate press coverage, screening time, and a chance to win a gold, silver or bronze leopard. Spike Lee's 16mm *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads* (under feature time at 60 minutes) filled one US slot in 1983; the other was filled by *Farestedah* (The Mission) by Iranian emigrant Parviz Sayyad. Both were well received by the European press and won awards: *Joe's Bed-Stuy*, a silver leopard, and *Farestedah* a bronze. The jury included Adrienne Mancina of the Museum of Modern Art representing the US.

Communication can be amusing or annoying at Locarno, as the festival reflects the bilingual problems Swiss people face every day. All the film documentation last year lacked English translations, alienating anyone who didn't pass French, German or Italian 101. Daily press conferences and roundtables moved slowly in the absence of a decisive "festival language." Swiss/Italian TV (TSI) covered the events with clips and interviews each evening—but only in Italian.

Although the New Directors competition is supposed to be the festival highlight, one glimpse of the program shows it also competes with eight other categories. If you're bored with first features, you can amble over to seven other events. Ozu and his compatriots filled the traditional Retrospective slot last year, while national cinema offered six titles from Brazil. A more highbrow category was the FIPRESCI (International Federation of Film Critics) award. Invited film critics chose six films for inclusion in semi-academic reverence. Emile de Antonio's *In the King of Prussia* was the US choice. The "Carte Blanche" slot allows one director each year free reign to show six films that most influenced his or her career. For TV freaks, TV movies were the newest facet of the Locarno fest. Premiered last year, this competition presented the "best" TV films made during

the past two years. The quantity of production was amazing: 92 features.

The various programs are shown in two screening rooms (the Morettina 1 and 2), two video screening rooms (correction: TV) and one Cinema Rex in town. The center Scholaire Morettina, by the way, is out of town, but a regular festival bus carts people back and forth, free of charge. The bus is an integral part of the festival social life and should not be underestimated. Many a critical debate is born here. Morettina is the daily romping ground of about 1,000 cinephiles. It has a cafe and a cinema bookstore and is hectic until 9:00 pm and the last bus back to town.

In the evening the focus of festivities shifts abruptly to the festival's high point—the Piazza Grande films. The town of Locarno, a picturesque tourist attraction, is overrun with August vacationers milling around with nothing to do. The festival organizers, seemingly taking this into consideration, decided to present a festival within a festival amounting to about 17 films, many left over from Cannes or Berlin, re-heated and digested by crowds numbering 2,000 to 3,000 each weekend. This proves to be a profitable venture; the films are apt to show soon at your neighborhood art theater: Imamura's *The Ballad of Narayama*, Saura's *Carmen*, Oshima's *Furyo*, Marker's *Sans Soleil* and McBride's *Breathless*, to name a few. Only Akerman's *Toute Une Nuit* or Aristarain's *Tiempo de Revanche* represented "unknown factors" and were shown with the hope of finding Swiss distribution rather than drawing crowds. The only drawback of the Piazza Grande screenings is that they carry an aura that seems to say "this is what great cinema is" or "this is what young, inexperienced filmmakers should aspire to."

[Although the smaller independent will face fierce competition in Locarno, participants over the past several years have expressed consistent satisfaction with both their treatment by the festival administration and the press. While it is not clear to what extent a screening in Locarno can help your distribution prospects, the Locarno festival and its director David Streiff have earned a reputation for excellence, not a bad context for an independent's debut. Streiff has already decided to invite Rob Nilsson's *Signal 7*, which he saw at the Rotterdam Cinemart, to the 1984 Festival, and if, after visiting Cannes and Berlin he still has another American spot to fill, he will visit New York. If you have a



feature film you would like to enter, please contact Wendy Lidell at FIVF as soon as possible.—WL]

Jacqueline Leger is a filmmaker and journalist living in Switzerland. This is the first of a series of articles on European festivals she will be contributing to this column.

## Mellow in Marin During Mill Valley

The Mill Valley Film Festival is held in beautiful, renowned Marin county, where Lucasfilm and many Bay Area filmmakers are located. But don't count on George Lucas attending your screening, even though Lucasfilm is a corporate sponsor. For Mill Valley is an intimate festival, supported by an enthusiastic and generally sophisticated Bay Area film-going and filmmaking community. The San Francisco press covers the festival thoroughly; the Sunday "Pink Sheet" in the *San Francisco Examiner* printed the festival's entire schedule, and both San Francisco papers reviewed the films daily. Last year, Robert Young's *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* received an excellent San Francisco review which influenced *Cortez's* distributor to move the film into a better house.

The festival's publicity staff does an excellent job. My film *Summerspell* attracted perhaps 20 critics, radio people and the like to its press preview, and was timed a few days in advance of its public screening. The staff made calls and followed leads, although it is the filmmaker's responsibility to let them know your expectations and needs. Program notes were the best I'd read, with reviews by staffers or critics which actually inspired you to see the films.

Like many small festivals, Mill Valley's programming is eclectic. It presents American and international fare, as well as Super-8

films, shorts and videotapes. Last year's independent features included Amy Smith's *Love Letters* and my own *Summerspell*, as well as tributes to Robert Young (*Alambrista! Nothing but a Man*) and Henry Jaglom (*Can She Bake a Cherry Pie?*, *A Safe Place*, *Tracks*). The European films included features recently completed or not yet in release.

The video festival presented varied fare ranging from a special Bay Area program to "The Best of Rock Video" to Rob Nilsson's discussion of his film *Signal 7* which was shot on video and transferred to 35mm.

The program of shorts featured American and international films. The Super-8 festival, held in the Arts Center across the street from the main theaters, attracted good crowds. Documentaries concentrated on the theme "Nuclear Realities." Because the Bay Area is very politically conscious, these films were well-received.

The Arts Center and Garden served as a focus for meetings, socializing and eating, so there was little of the schizophrenia of other festivals spread over multiple screenings and locales.

My only criticisms of the festival are the inadequate sound in the Sequoia Theaters I and II and the scheduling of parties at the same time as late afternoon and early evening screenings. I was torn between being "announced" as in-attendance at a party and seeing the one-and-only screening of *Monkey Grip*, by Australian producer Pat Lovell. (By the way, Lovell herself suffered from a confusion independents would do well to heed. She didn't speak after her screening because she didn't know she could or should. When in doubt, it's good to ask about such matters.)

Word has it that next year the staffers would like a more "upbeat" festival in terms of theme ("A Celebration of Film"), as last year was considered a somewhat "dark" year

thematically. Next year the festival plans to give more attention to the work of American independents and experimental film. Traditionally held in August, the festival has been bumped to September 20-26 next year by the Olympic extravaganza further south. For information, contact Mill Valley Film Festival, Suite 20, 80 Lomita Drive, Mill Valley, CA 94941. Tel: (415) 383-0090.

—Lina Shanklin

## Munich: A Newborn In the Bavarian Belt

A high point of last summer's foreign festival circuit for American independents came during the 1st Munich International Film Festival, when Werner Herzog, a founder of the New German Cinema, came forward to kiss the hem of first-time independent director Lina Shanklin's (*Summerspell*) skirt at the closing press conference of the festival. In one grand symbolic gesture, the baton was passed from the great national film movement of the seventies to the burgeoning New American Cinema of recent years. It is due to this emphasis on the new trends of cinema, and the support of the international film community, that the new Munich Festival has been able to place itself among the world's high-ranking film festivals so firmly in such a short time.

The festival, which ran from June 18-26, under the able direction of Eberhard Hauff, presented over 80 major feature films in three theaters throughout the city of Munich, capital of the German film industry. With a number of highlighted entries coming directly from Cannes, the festival was able to push itself directly into the post-Cannes non-competitive category previously shared by New York, Toronto, Sydney and Los Angeles' FILMEX. Using a unique blend of screenings and seminars/discussions built around a "special sections" emphasis, the Munich Festival provided a valuable forum for American independents in Europe, as well as an opportunity for indie directors to bathe in a limelight denied them at home. The "special sections" in 1983 included international first runs, American independents, off-Hollywood retrospectives, women directors, New German Cinema, a New German Cinema retrospective, children's films, and a special events lineup of film classics.

In addition to Shanklin and the Independent Feature Project, Americans in attendance included Robert Young (*The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*), who served as spokesman for the New American Cinema in a number of introductory statements and seminars, and Deac Rossell of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, who curated the "off-Hollywood" retrospective of earlier American independents.

The 2nd Munich International Film Festival has been slotted for a June 23-July 1 run this year, with equal emphasis on American independents. Although not as internationally important as Berlin or Cannes, the festival does provide enthusiastic audiences, empathetic critics and programmers, and enough buyers from the German-speaking markets to mark a



Photographed in California mountains and deserts, Lina Shanklin's *Summerspell* showed at both Mill Valley and Munich, where Werner Herzog kissed her hem in a fit of enthusiasm for the film.





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notable addition to the international festival circuit. [It should be stressed that participation in Munich will preclude any possibility of presenting your film in the following edition of Berlin, still indisputably Germany's major film festival (and second only to Cannes in worldwide importance). Since Berlin, which takes place in February, annually precedes Munich in June, this won't often be a problem, but it's something you may want to consider if you finish your film during the time between the two festivals.—Ed.]

Filmmakers benefit most by attending the festival in person. Activities include guided tours of the Bavarian film studios, special events featuring filmmakers, and lively discussions of films with avid audiences. Meetings with German filmmakers and industry people can be valuable in terms of individual projects and revealing about indie filmmaking in general.

Rather than being relegated to an "independent" section, American filmmakers turned up in a wide variety of categories last year, and probably will again this summer. Last year, indies popped up in the retrospective, American independents and women directors categories. If 1983 is any indication, press attention should be significant, especially for those who attend the festival.

For more information contact either the Independent Feature Project, 1776 Broadway, 9th floor, NY NY; Tel. (212) 245-1622, or the festival: Munich International Film Festival, Turkenstr. 93, 8000 Munchen 40. West Germany—Timothy Ney and Paul Smart

Timothy Ney is executive director of the Independent Feature Project and Paul Smart is its program associate.

## IN BRIEF

This month's additional festivals have been compiled by Melody Pariser and Wendy Lidell with the help of the FIVE files. Listings do not constitute an endorsement, and since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

### Domestic

● **AMERICAN DEAD FISH SUPER-8 FESTIVAL**, April, a 3-yr.-old festival that promotes the use of dead fish in S-8 film, is sponsored by the Fish & Film Club of America. 3 Trout medals of distinction awarded each year: gold, silver and bronze. Films selected by a committee of club members and critics. Submissions limited to 1 entry per director. Entry fee: \$10. Deadline: April 1; next festival will be held April 1, 1985. Winning films will be sent upstream to die. Contact: American Dead Fish S-8 Festival, 33 Spawn Lake Road, Center Ossipee NH 03814.



● **MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL**, Sept 17-20, named after famed anthropologist whose pioneering work did so much to establish & encourage use of film for documentation & analytic purposes. 50 films in 16mm will be screened at the Museum of Natural History to a projected total audience of over 8000. Almost 75% of the films in this non-competitive event are independent. Deadline: May 1; no fee. Before entering, please get in touch with Florence Stone or Malcolm Arth, Co-Chairpersons, Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St, NY NY 10024; (212) 873-1070.

● **NATIONAL VIDEO FESTIVAL & STUDENT COMPETITION**, Sept. 20-23, will concentrate on TV regulation and deregulation for its 1984 programming theme. Festival's primary goal is to bring members of the media community together to exchange ideas & information; concurrent national student competition is held to encourage young videomakers in light of the changing face of the medium. Regional winners in student competition receive video cameras; national winners receive ¼" field decks & trip to the festival. Winning entries aired on LA & Washington PTV. This year, some work will be screened as part of the Olympic Arts Festival in LA. Festival's program is mainly obtained through AFI's established network of national contacts, but interested producers can call festival associate director, Jackie Kain. Student competition accepts ¾" fiction, non-fiction & experimental videotapes; entry fee \$5. Deadline: May 1. Contact: Jackie Kain, American Film Institute, PO Box 27999, 2021 North Western Ave., Los Angeles CA 90027; (213) 856-7787.

● **NEW ENGLAND FILM FESTIVAL**, May, previously announced in March issue, has told FIVE that the *Boston Globe* has agreed to sponsor the inaugural screening in May. Prize money has been increased from \$1,000 to \$2500, including a \$1000 Best in Fest prize. Deadline has been extended from March 13 to April 16.

● **THE FIFTH ANNUAL ASBURY FILM FESTIVAL**, May 12-13, now part of Asbury Productions, a small film & video company, is accepting 16mm optical track prints, no longer than 20 min., in all categories: dramatic, animated, experimental, documentary. This is not an awards program but a chance for indies to screen projects in front of producers, critics, fellow filmmakers and the public. Entry Fee: \$10. Deadline: April 30. Contact: Doug Le Claire, Asbury Productions Ltd., 590 Rutland St., Westbury NY; (212) 679-7199.

● **PSA-MPD AMERICAN INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, August, proposes to improve amateur & student filmmaking by recognizing young filmmakers at the annual PSA convention. Awards presented to scenario, documentary, experimental, travel, humor & nature films. Students, amateurs, professionals judged separately in S-8, 8 & 16mm film, max 30 min. (Acceptance of video still undecided.) Entry fees: PSA member \$10/non-member \$15. Deadline: May 15. Contact: James Meeker, Photographic Society of America-Motion Picture



Division, 1329 Hilltop Drive, Milan IL 61264; (309) 787-1291.

● **SAN FRANCISCO INT'L LESBIAN & GAY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, June 18-24, is held each year during San Francisco's Lesbian/Gay Freedom Celebration. Event brings together best in feature, documentary, short & avant-garde films from across the country. Film festival accepts only work about lesbians & gay men in S-8, 16 & 35mm, while the video section will accept work on any theme or subject if maker is gay. 1/2", 3/4" videotape accepted. Video festival includes traveling exhibition; entrants may participate in showings on metropolitan cable systems. Awards will be presented to network news stations for sensitive handling of gay issues in the media. Film deadline: May 1. Film contact: John Wright or Michael Lumpkin, FRAMELINE, P.O. Box 14792, San Francisco CA 94114; (415) 861-5245. Video deadline: May 31. Video contact: John Canaly, FRAMELINE, 182-B Castro St, San Francisco CA 94114; (415) 861-0843.

● **SINKING CREEK FILM CELEBRATION**, June 12-16, probes aspects of non-commercial cinema through seminars, screenings, workshops, guest presentations & sessions in film analysis & criticism. A longtime favorite of independent producers, the 15th annual conference on film will once again bring the best 16mm independent & student work to Tennessee. Prizes total \$6000. Entry fees—up to 10 min: \$5; 10-20 min: \$10; 20-40 min: \$15; 40-60 min: \$20. Deadline: May 8. Contact: Mary Jane Coleman, Creekside Farm, Route 8, Greeneville TN 37743; (615) 638-6524. Those interested in attending the festival should contact SCFC, Sarratt Student Center, Vanderbilt University, Nashville TN 37240; (614) 322-2471.

● **WES FRANCIS AUDIOVISUAL EXCELLENCE (WAVE) CONTEST**, October, honors audiovisual productions on parks, recreation, leisure activities & conservation effort. 16mm, 3/4" video and single projector slide shows accepted. Awards presented at the Nat'l Recreation & Parks Assn. Convention. No fee. Deadline: May 31. Contact: Martha Nutel, Nat'l Recreation and Park Assn., 31-01 Park Center Drive, Alexandria VA 22303; (703) 820-4940.

● **WORKS BY WOMEN**, October, shows women's films over two days as diverse as Maya Deren's *Meshe of the Afternoon*, Connie Field's *Rosie the Riveter* & Lee Grant's *Tell Me a Riddle*. Past speakers have included Amy Greenfield, Pam Yates & author Ann Kaplan. Among 1983 entries was *So Far From India*, a film by Mira Nair, also screened at the New York Film Festival. Send 16mm film or 3/4" videotape. No fee. Deadline: May 31. Contact: Christine Bickford, Media Services, Barnard College Library, Broadway at 117th St, NY NY 10027; (212) 280-2418.

## Foreign

● **BULGARIAN INT'L FESTIVAL OF COMEDY & SATIRICAL FILMS**, May, seeks to stimulate cinema presentation of humor & satire in service of human progress. Awards, fees & film gauges not specified. (Event first held in 1981 & said to be triennial. Contact before sending material.) Deadline: May. Contact: Stefan Futounov, House of Humor and Satire, P.O. Box 104, 5300 Gabrovo, Bulgaria; tel: (066) 2-72-29, 2-93-00.

● **INT'L FESTIVAL OF ECONOMICS & TRAINING FILMS**, November, acquaints public



500 members of the Little People of America gather in *Little People*, shown at Margaret Mead.

with film & video as aids to teaching & training. Economics & training films in S-8/16mm require no fee. Deadline: May. Contact: Didier Cloos, President, Cercle Solvay, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 48, B-1050 Brussels, Belgium; tel: (02) 6490030, X2528.

● **INT'L FESTIVAL OF NEW SUPER-8 CINEMA**, August, provides showcase focusing primarily on new S-8 filmmakers. Festival is well-publicized in Venezuela, conducts daytime workshops & evening parties at mountainside villas. Large audiences view the competition nightly; participating filmmaker Fernando Birri once proclaimed the festival the "Cannes of Super-8." Winning filmmakers receive approximately \$1500 & opportunity to show work on French TV. Further information available from AIVF member Toni Treadway, 63 Dimick St, Somerville MA 02143; (617) 666-3372. No fee; entrant pays \$10 for return postage. Deadline: early July. Contact: Carlos & Lisette Castillo, Calle Passo Real, Quinta Linda, Prados del Este, Caracas Venezuela; tel: (582) 771-367.

● **LA ROCHELLE FILM FESTIVAL**, June-July, promotes non-commercial films as part of a larger arts festival supported by the French government. Event is non-competitive & accepts 16 & 35mm features. No fee; entrant pays postage. Deadline: May. Contact: Jean-Loup Passek, 4 rue de la Paix, 75002 Paris, France; Tel: (1) 260-72-21, 296-23-44.



Flip Johnson's animated *The Roar from Within* was a "Social Concerns" winner at Sinking Creek.



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● **OVIEDO INT'L VIDEOFILM FESTIVAL**, July, will promote general culture in Spain through the "videofilm." Shows wide variety of categories including musical, artistic, documentary videotapes & "films recorded in videocassette" in such genres as adventure, action, western, detective story, play, drama, war, thriller & fantasy. First prize in each category awarded \$900. No fee. U-Matic tape only. Amateur video competition awards up to \$350 & accepts 1/2" video systems. Deadline: May 31. Contact: Isaac del Rivero, Salon Int'l de Videocine de Oviedo, Nueve de Mayo, 2-1ª A, Oviedo, Spain; tel: (985) 22 10 96/97/98, ext. 30.

● **TOULON INT'L FESTIVAL OF MARITIME & SEA EXPLORATION**, May, requests films on the theme "The Sea of Maritime Exploration," including travel, research, biology, archaeology, geology, marine ethnography, seaports. Films

may be feature or documentary; 16 or 35mm. Gold, silver, bronze "Anchors" awarded with modest cash prizes. Deadline: May 1. Contact: Secretariat of the Festival, 14 The Peiresc, 83000 Toulon, France.

● **WELLINGTON FILM FESTIVAL**, June encourages & promotes widespread interest in new films which would otherwise not be brought to New Zealand. This non-competitive festival invites films from many countries which contribute to a knowledge of new styles & trends in filmmaking. Wellington will only present films which have been shown at a recognized festival outside New Zealand. 35mm only. No fee; entrant pays postage. Deadline: April-May. (Those interested should write ASAP.) Contact: Bill Godsden, Wellington Film Festival, P.O. Box 9544, Courtenay Place, Wellington, New Zealand. ■

(continued from page 21)

because they pushed the smaller distributors, like Unifilm, out of the business. So now those small ones don't exist as an outlet for the independent filmmaker. But they'll come back. It's cyclical. The demise of the classics divisions—and this *is* going to happen—will make room again for smaller independent distributors. It'll take a couple of years.

**SL:** Do you think the demise of the classics will push prices up or down in terms of the bidding for independent films?

**BB:** I think it will put prices into realistic terms. The top films—which aren't that many—will always command a high price. The secondary film may not get as much money, but it might be handled better. But if the film is unsuccessful, the situation will be worse for the filmmaker, because he will not have gotten [a large] advance to begin

with—and quite often the advance is all he's going to see.

**SL:** How do you devise a marketing strategy for an independent film?

**BB:** The first and most difficult thing is to figure out who your audience is. Everything follows from that. Only Hollywood films don't have to do that, because they have so much money to spend reaching a broad audience. But when you're dealing with a small film, and you can't spend a lot of money, you have to target. It's probably the most sensitive thing in opening—other than the *most* mysterious factor, which is timing. There are certain films which, if they had opened six months later, could not have made it. Or they opened too early. There are always shifts in audience taste, and they're perceptible, but only over a period of time.

Your "strategy" often depends on one publication. You work two months to prepare



"Ewe seemed to like it—but what did the Times say?"

David Keller



a film, do campaigns and interviews, and then you say, "Tomorrow when I open, if I get a good review in the [New York] Times I'm OK; if I don't, I'm dead." So what "strategy" can you develop? You might say, "OK, I'll open out of town first." So you open out of town and do well; but then when you try to sell the film to an exhibitor he'll say, "What did it do in New York?" And you say, "It did well in Seattle." He'll say, "I don't care about that. What are the [New York] reviews like?" It's a very sad state.

It may sound cynical, but the biggest sheep are the intellectuals. The general audience will look at a poster and say, "Hey, this looks good, let's go in and see it." The supposed "thinking" people will say, "What did the Times say?" That's always galled me. And it's not the fault of the Times; it's the fault of all those people who invest a few publications with enormous power to make or break something that has taken somebody years to make.

**SL:** Whose job is it to cultivate the press—the distributor's, the filmmaker's, or the publicist's?

**BB:** Quite a few of the critics are friends of mine. But it does not help. I just opened *A Woman in Flames* and my friend Rex Reed said in his review, "It's having a brief stop at the Plaza on its way to oblivion." Some filmmakers think, "Oh, you can cultivate [the critics]." If they don't like your film, you can't cultivate anything. The most you can possibly do, if it's within their power, is to get them not to review a film if they don't like it.

The problem is often utilizing media exposure to translate into box office. This is a very important element for independents and it's why they don't quite understand festivals. Most festivals are really harmful to filmmakers. If you have a chance to sell your film to a distributor, you should never put it into a festival. It can only have negative results. If the film is received badly, it kills your distribution deal. If it's received well, but you don't have a distributor to open it, you're not prepared to take advantage of the press. So there's really no advantage, outside of the ego. And there are so many meaningless festivals—Chicago, Filmex—it's nonsense! They do *themselves* a service, they are generally set up by a few people trying to create jobs for themselves—not to serve film. It's only if you've gone to everyone and nobody wants your film that the festival can be positive. The New York Film Festival is an exception to this, because of the festival's prestige. But if you get a really terrible review [there], it can kill your chances. If you're going to be in the New York Film Festival, make your deal *before* the film is shown, unless you *know* the reviews are going to be good.

Another thing I always suggest to independent filmmakers is that they put aside \$50,000 in their budget in case they cannot get a distributor or the *proper deal* from a distributor, so that they can then open their film themselves. With that kind of money you

can get a proper New York opening. But do-it-yourself openings should *only* be used as a last resort.

**SL:** I think *Seeing Red* is being opened by the filmmakers themselves at the New Yorker.

**BB:** If they're opening it to make money, they're deluding themselves. But if they're opening it to get reviews so they can sell it non-theatrically, that's fine. You have to know what you're going after.

The biggest danger of opening here is to overspend. With a documentary, you should spend as little as possible. Spending more money isn't going to get more people in to see it. Documentaries are, by their nature, so damn difficult; people just don't want to see them.

**SL:** How important is choosing a theater in building an audience?

**BB:** It's more crucial from the standpoint of economics, because some theaters cost more than others. And it's more crucial to how exhibitors around the country *perceive* the film than it is to building an audience. You can open at the Waverly and be very successful, but exhibitors will say, "Oh, that's a Village theater." If you open at Cinema I, they say, "It must be an important film." It's one of those stupidities.

**SL:** How do you determine advances?

**BB:** Negotiable, on a film-by-film basis. But there are quite a few films I would not give advances to. Most of them. Look, this whole business is really a game of power. Either you are begging a distributor to take your film, or the distributor is begging you to give it to him. So you meet somewhere in-between. It all depends on who holds the power. ■

## NOTICES

**NOTICES** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others included as space permits. Send notices to THE INDEPENDENT, c/o FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New

York NY 10012. For further info, call ((212) 473-3400. Deadline: 8th of second preceding month (e.g. April 8th for June). Edited by Mary Guzzy.

### Buy • Rent • Sell

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm Moviola upright editing machine. New sound head; very good condition. 1 picture, 1 sound head. \$1200. Call: (212) 228-6709/(516) 734-6774, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Angenieux 12-240mm f4.5 lens w/finder in case; cap, 3 filters, shade, tripod support, wrench. \$2900. Angenieux 12-120mm T2.5 Arri mount w/case. \$600. 3 Arri-S mags. \$200/ea. Arri-BL mag. \$750. Mitchell-type mags. \$60/ea. Call: (212) 236-0153, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm Auricon Cine-Voice Conversion w/TVT shutter; new sync motor, 1 400' mag, case, accessories. Capable of magnet or double system sound. \$500. Contact: Michael, Millennium Film Workshop, (212) 673-0090, NY.

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w/single system amp, 9.5-57mm Angenieux, 3 mags, 2 batteries, 2 chargers, 1 1200' mag; 150mm, 300mm & 400mm Kilfit lenses, tripod. Plus Nagra SN, several mics, 60 circle crystal & resolver. \$6000. Call: (212) 532-1673, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Beaulieu 6008 Pro, Schneider 6-70 f1.4 zoom, Century Precision 3.5mm super wide f1.4, batteries, external packs, charger, numerous Tiffin filters, CSS-1 crystal cassette recorder/resolver. All like new, \$2900 firm. Panasonic WV-3230-12X Pro-line video camera, NV-8420 VHS recorder, JVC TM-P3U 3" monitor, batteries, chargers, etc. Brand new; only 1 test roll through. \$2350 firm. Contact: Don Hoskins, 1424 SE 15 St., Ft. Lauderdale FL 33316, (305) 463-1275.

● **FOR SALE:** Beaulieu 6008 Pro w/Schneider 6-70 f1.4 lens, 2 large rechargeable battery packs w/recharging unit. Like new. Sekonic System meter L-428 w/Lumisphere, Lumidisc, Lumigrid, leather case, neck cord & Movie Dial. Never used. Contact: Karyl-Lynn, (202) 686-0898, DC.

● **FOR SALE:** Bolex H-16 Rex 4, 18-86mm 2.5 Kern Vario Switar EE, pistol grip, Rexofader, extension tubes, Uni-motor B, slate, case. Excellent condition; \$1600. Call: (212) 475-1915, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Uher Monitor 4400 tape recorder (report). Sync possible. Never used. Stereo, mic & battery recharger. Contact: Silkel Krikor, (212) 441-3615, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Beaulieu 5008 sound/multispeed S-8 camera, Schneider 6-70mm zoom, lens interchangeability, battery recharger, plug adapter, manual. Recently overhauled, excellent condition; \$699. Call: (212) 675-7534, NY.

### SPECIAL THANKS

**FIVF gratefully thanks the following individuals for contributions to the organization.**

Richard A. Armstrong, Dayton, OH  
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Nancy Schreiber, NY, NY  
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Michelle Parkerson, Washington, DC  
Merry Valk, Philadelphia, PA  
Richard Gordon, Philadelphia, PA



## PRINCIPLES & RESOLUTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION

### AIVE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Association is a trade association of and for independent video and filmmakers.
2. The Association encourages excellence, commitment and independence; it stands for the principle that video and filmmaking is more than just a job—it goes beyond economics to involve the expression of broad human values.
3. The Association works, though the combined efforts of its membership, to provide practical, informational and moral support for independent video and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival of, and providing for, the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.
4. The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.
5. The Association champions independent video and film as valuable and vital expressions of our culture and is determined, by mutual action, to open pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

### AIVE RESOLUTIONS

1. To affirm the creative use of media in fostering cooperation, community and justice in human relationships without respect to age, sex, race, class or religion.
2. To recognize and reaffirm the freedom of expression of the independent film and videomaker, as spelled out in the AIVE principles.
3. To promote constructive dialogue and heightened awareness among the membership of the social, artistic and personal choices involved in the pursuit of both independent and sponsored work, via such mechanisms as screenings and forums.
4. To continue to work to strengthen AIVE's services to independents, in order to help reduce the membership's dependence on the kinds of sponsorship which encourage the compromise of personal values.

● **FOR SALE:** 2 16mm b&w or color Peterson printing machines w/fader units & sound heads. Excellent condition, like new. Reasonable price. Contact: J&D Lab, (212) 691-5613, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Moviola M86 flatbed editor, flicker-free prism, low wow & flutter, quick stop circuit, torque motor box. 3 yrs. old, excellent condition. Fair price. Contact: Ron, (617) 354-6054, MA.

● **FOR SALE:** 6-plate Steenbeck; old but good, rebuilt w/additional amplifier & speaker: \$6000 or best offer. Call: (212) 765-8860, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Bolex H-16 camera, Wollensak 25mm-1.9 lens, Solgar 17mm wide-angle 2.7 lens, Kodak Anastigmatice 2.7-102mm lens, \$300. Pan Cinor Berthiot VarioSwitar 17-85mm zoom w/viewfinder, \$7000. Bolex 16mm Matte Box, \$125. Bolex 16mm motor w/battery box at different speeds for hand crank, \$60. A S-8 synchronizer, \$125. Hahnel S-8 splicer, \$35. Call: (212) 677-2181/924-2254, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm upright Moviola. Excellent condition; takes single-spliced film. 1 picture head; 2 sound heads. Save on flatbed rentals; it will pay for itself. Call: (212) 666-6787, leave message, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Complete broadcast quality production pkg. Includes Ikegami HL-83, 3/4" JVC 4700U, color Videotek monitor, wave-form, mics, lights & tripod. Production personnel also available. Competitive rates. Contact: Everglade Prods., (212) 925-1247, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Panasonic 3990 camera w/batteries, recharger, 10-14 pin cable converter, hard & soft cases. \$1500 or best offer. Contact: Alan, (212) 222-3321/Caryn, (212) 222-6748, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** New Sony M-3 camera w/3 tubes, 4800 deck, batteries, monitor, tripod, mics, cables & Lowell lighting. Very portable; \$250/day w/cameraperson. Contact: Alan, (212) 222-3321/Caryn, (212) 222-6748, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Ikegami HL-79A, BVU 110, lights, mics, insurance. \$450/day. Radio mics, car, sunglasses, crew additional as required. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Tektronix waveform monitor, \$650. Panasonic NV-9300A. \$900. JVC 4400 portable 3/4". \$1200. Frezzolini battery belts, 6AH. \$125. Sharp 13" monitor receiver. \$300. JVC KY 2000. \$2400. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony 366 reel-to-reel 7" tape deck. Quartertrack stereo, 3 heads, new belts, rollers, playback head, edit feature. Nagra compatible. Best offer. Call (212) 548-2875 evenings 6-10pm, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Sunny, attractive offices, furnished or unfurnished w/private entrances. Near west Village. 1, 2, & 3 room suites. Additional conference/screening room & office equipment available to share. Very high floor, excellent panoramic views, small terraces, air conditioning. 24 hr. building, excellent security. Sublet. Reasonable. Call: (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Broadcast ENG gear w/Ikegami cameras & BVU 110, all accessories & experienced

crew. Also, 3/4" computer editing. Contact, Lisa, Metro Video, (212) 608-6005, NY.

● **FOR SALE OR RENT:** 6-plate Steenbeck. Call: (212) 581-2365, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Nagra SN recorder & Cody designed radio transmitter system that starts recorder & slates, takes up to 100 ft. from camera. SN resolver, SRM level control, numerous cables & SN tape included. Innovative system for unobtrusive documentarian. Excellent condition, \$3200. Contact: Ken Levine, 720 W. Blaine, Seattle WA 98119, (206) 285-3057.

● **FOR RENT:** 3/4" Sony deck & 19" Panasonic color TV monitor on rollable stand with necessary cables; for non-profit purposes. \$35/day or \$100/wk. Payment in advance. No transport: you pick it up, bring it back. Contact: AIVE, 625 Broadway, 9th Fl., NY NY 10012, (212) 473-3400.

## Conferences • Workshops

● **INPUT:** International Public Television Screening Conference, annual forum for producers & programmers to exchange ideas on quality of public television. April 8-14, Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston SC. 300 participants from 20-30 countries. Formal accreditation necessary; no charge to delegates. Other TV professionals & independents welcome. Contact: Carolyn Holderman, SC-ETV Network, PO Drawer L, Columbia SC 29250, (803) 758-7552.

● **CERTIFICATE IN TELEVISION STUDIES:** Available from New School for Social Research for concentrated studies in television & new technologies, production & writing, performance & marketing. Internships & independent study available. Some courses offered in cooperation w/Global Village, NY National Academy of TV Arts & Sciences & *Channels* magazine. Contact: Mary Carney Blake, Television Program Advisor, (212) 741-8903, NY.

● **WORKSHOPS AT COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA:** Beginning Filmmaking, April 30-June 13, 7-10:30 pm Mon. & Wed. S-8 cameras provided for entire 7-wk. course. Instructor: Darrell Wilson. \$150. Intermediate Filmmaking, May 1-June 14, 7-10:30 pm Mon. & Wed. S-8 equipment provided. Instructor: Alan Berliner. \$125. Weekend Workshops: All \$85. 16mm Basics, Sat. & Sun. April 28 & 29 & Sat., May 5, 12-6 pm. Film & equipment provided. Instructor: John Murphy. Lighting, Sat. & Sun. May 12 & 13 & Sat. May 19, 12-6 pm. Instructor: Mark Daniels. Sound Recording, Sat. & Sun. June 2 & 3, 10-6 pm. Instructor: Helene Kaplan. Optical Printing, Sat. June 9, 10-6 pm & Tues. June 12, 7-10 pm. Instructor: Bill Brand. Editing Techniques, Sat. & Sun. June 16 & 17, 10-6 pm. Instructor: Alan Berliner. Discounts for taking multiple workshops & 10% discounts for Collective members. Call: CLC, (212) 925-3926, NY.

● **SPRING WORKSHOPS AT YOUNG FILMMAKERS/VIDEO ARTS:** Professional instruction in film/video production & theory designed for both novices & professionals. Course lengths range from weekend workshops to 12-wk. programs including Documentary, Location & TV Production, Directing for Camera, Lighting, Audio, Film & Video Editing, Screenwriting & Videodance. Equipment rentals & post-production facilities available for independent producers, artists & non-profit groups at low cost. Free brochure



available. Contact: YF/VA, (212) 673-9361, weekdays 10 am-6 pm, NY.

● **NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM SEMINAR:** "From Daytime to Prime Time: An Overview of Television Production in New York" presents leading industry figures discussing opportunities in entertainment, soaps, news & sports. Young professional men & women especially invited. Thursday, April 16. Contact: NYWIF, P.O. Box 652, Ansonia Sta., NY NY 10023, or Emily Squires, (212) 866-8359.

● **WOMEN MAKE MOVIES WORKSHOPS:** Budgeting for Film & Video, Apr. 5; Film Graphics, Apr. 19. Evening sessions at Taller Latinoamericano, 19 W. 21st St., 7:30, \$2/WMM members, \$4/non-members. April 7-8, 3/4" Video Editing Intensive: weekend workshops offering theory & technique of video editing, hands-on experience with SONY RM440, 5850 decks, character generator, SEG, Audio Mix Board. Enrollment limited, \$65/WMM members, \$80/non-members. Apr. 28, Intro to Video: a day-long basic course in 1/2" production, theory & hands-on experience. Enrollment limited, \$15/WMM members, \$25/non-members. Call WMM to register for video editing & production only: (212) 929-6477.

● **INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION & MARKETING FOR INDEPENDENTS:** all-day seminar sponsored by Astoria Motion Picture & Television Foundation & American Film Marketing Association, Sat., April 14, 9:30 am-5 pm at Astoria Foundation. Representatives of 14 major distribution companies including MGM/UA Home Video, ABC Pictures International, Orion & Satori will participate. 8 additional speakers on topics such as licensing, high profits from low budgets, developing technologies, pr & sales promotion. \$75 fee covers seminar plus lunch. Contact: Astoria Foundation, 34-31 35th St., Astoria NY 11106, (212) 784-4520.

## Editing Facilities

● **EDITING SPACE FOR RENT** in Brooklyn: 16mm 6-plate Moviola w/2 synchronizers, 4-channel amp, 2 rivas splicers, rewinds, split reels, trim bin, Moviola upright, etc. Very low rates. Call: (212) 236-0153, NY.

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● **LARGE EDIT ROOM** w/6-plate Steenbeck. Windows, carpet, phone, access to video deck, copy machine, etc. Contact: Bob McBride, Earthrise, 330 West 42 St., NY NY 10036, (212) 594-6967.

● **MEDIA ARTS CENTER** at South Carolina Arts Commission offers low-cost access for southeastern independent videomakers working on low-budget non-commercial projects. Sony V05800, V05850 & RM440 3/4" system includes 2 Videotek RM-12 color monitors, blue gun, underscan & cross-pulse, Tascam Model 30 8-channel sound mixer w/amps & speakers. 24 hr. access, sleeping, kitchen & shower facilities. \$50/day. Call: (803) 758-7942, 8:30 am-5 pm Mon.-Fri., SC.

● **EDITING ROOM:** Fully equipped w/6-plate flatbed Moviola, bins, synchronizer, viewer & splicer. Near Greenwich Village west. High floor,

panoramic view, small terrace. Conference/screening room to share. Also available for sublet: office & office equipment. 24 hr. building, excellent security, reasonable. Call: (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **TWO COMPLETE EDITING ROOMS** in Chelsea: (a) 24-hr. access: Moviola flatbed w/torque motor box; complete 16mm edit equipment; complete kitchen & bathroom; minimal office facilities; telephone; air conditioning. (b) 10am-6pm access; Steenbeck; complete 16mm edit equipment; ltd. kitchen, bath facilities; specialized edit equipment available at extra cost. Contact: David Loucka, Lance Bird, (212) 584-7530, NY.

● **EDITING & POST-PRODUCTION FACILITIES AVAILABLE:** Short-term rentals only. 9am-5pm business days, KEM 8-plate 16/35mm, 3/4" editing, sound transfer, narration recording, extensive sound effects library, interlock screening. Contact: Cinetudes Film Productions, 295 West 4 St., NY NY 10014; (212) 966-4600.

● **BRODSKY & TREADWAY S-8 & 8MM FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER MASTERS:** Scene-by-scene density & total color correction, variable speed & freeze frame, sound from any source. Artists & broadcasters like our work. By appointment only. Call (617) 666-3372, MA.

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● **LARGE COMFORTABLE EDITING ROOM** w/KEM 8-plate Universal editing table, 16mm & 35mm, rewinds, bins, splicers, synchronizers, etc., private phone; additional office space available. Midtown location. Call: Errol Morris Films, 1697 Broadway, NY NY 10019, (212) 757-7478/582-4045.

● **REGULAR & S-8 FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER:** Professional quality, industrial or broadcast; much better than you've seen before. Contact: Landy, 400 East 83 St. #4A, NY NY 10028; (212) 734-1402.

● **SONY BVU 3/4" EDITING:** \$25/hr. w/editor. Contact: Kathy Abbott/Karen Ranucci, (212) 242-2320, NY.

● **EDITOR OF ACADEMY AWARD-nominated** documentary now cuts 3/4" video off-line. JVC decks w/FM dub, Cezar IVC microprocessor controller, special effects keyer & colorizer, fade to black, waveform & pulse cross monitor, b&w graphics camera w/animation stand & titling system, mics, turntable, audio cassette, VHS time code burn in. \$25/hr. for projects under \$3500. Contact: Bruce Ettinger, (212) 226-8489, NY.

● **SELF-SERVICE EDITING:** 3/4" JVC Tapehandlers, RM-88U editor, free instruction. \$20/hr. Transfers, dubs, etc. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **MOVIOLA M-77s FOR RENT:** \$500/mo. in your workspace. 15% discount to A1VF members. Contact: Philmaster Productions, (212) 873-4470, NY.

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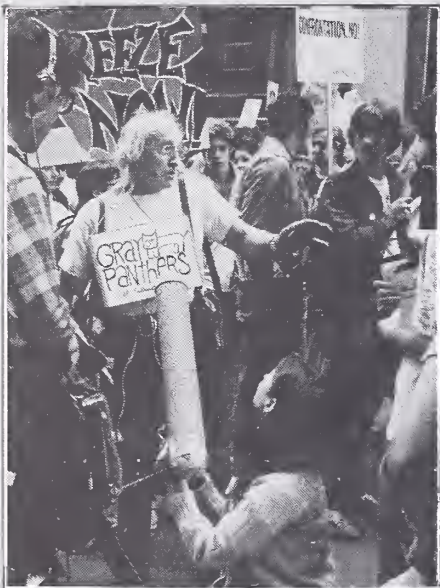
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## IN &amp; OUT OF PRODUCTION

## MARY GUZZY

Despite a decidedly conservative shift in the policies of arts funding agencies and other politically sensitive entities, independent film and video projects that tackle controversial social and political issues from an alternative perspective continue to gain audiences and recognition.



Courtesy Videomaker

Caught in the middle: Miskito Indians speak out in John Caldwell's *Personas Desplazadas*.

tivities including those of the UN, and interviews with campesinos, Nicaraguan officials and US military officers. *Personas Desplazadas* was broadcast in January on WTTW-Ch 11, Chicago after an October premiere at the Center for New Television. It is distributed by Video Data Bank, School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

## HISTORY LESSONS

In the midst of the headlong rush to get where we're going, several independents have created projects that remind us of where we've been:

After four years of archival film research with support from the New York Council on Humanities, the Pew Foundation and the now-defunct Independent Documentary Fund, Tom Johnson and Lance Bird (*No Place to Hide*) have completed *The World of Tomorrow*, a 77-minute documentary about the 1939 NY World's Fair. The film examines social forces and ideals—symbolized and sometimes masked by the Fair—which shaped the America of 1939 and our world today. With original footage from promotional films made by the Fair Corporation, newsreels, home movies and films used in actual Fair exhibitions, *World of Tomorrow* seeks to open a filmic time capsule, placing the Fair in a larger national and historical context. The film, which opened at NY's Film Forum on March 7, will also be screened at the Art Institute/Chicago and the Hirschhorn Museum in Washington, DC. A PBS airing is slated for mid-1984. Johnson and Bird are especially pleased that *World of Tomorrow* has been selected to open the 1984 Atlanta Film Festival on April 6.

Producer/director Ross Spears (*Agee*) has released his 90-minute documentary on the turbulent history of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Entitled *The Electric Valley*, the film depicts the far-reaching impact of this huge government energy project begun in the Depression as a social experiment designed to create a new prosperity in the impoverished Tennessee Valley. The film traces the TVA's history from the idealism of its early days to its vilification as a polluter of the environ-

ment and hotbed of political corruption to the current spirit of reform within the agency, focusing on all those—from farmers and workers to songwriters and politicians—who were touched by the project. Spears made *The Electric Valley* for \$250,000. He is currently in pre-production for a documentary about the Civil War.

*A Little Rebellion Now and Then: Prologue to the Constitution*, a docudrama intended to remind Americans of our long legacy of dissidence, is in pre-production at Cambridge-based Calliope Film Resources. The half-hour film will reenact and document Shay's rebellion, the post-Revolutionary War tax revolt against the fledgling American government which directly influenced the framing of the Constitution. Filmmakers Randall Conrad and Christine Dall (*The Dozens*) received a \$50,000 production grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy in January. Production will begin in August, and *A Little Rebellion* is scheduled for completion in February, 1985. The film's budget is expected to total \$100,000. Conrad and Dall also have long-range plans to produce a feature drama about Shay's Rebellion; a draft of the screenplay is already in the works.

## MOVING ON

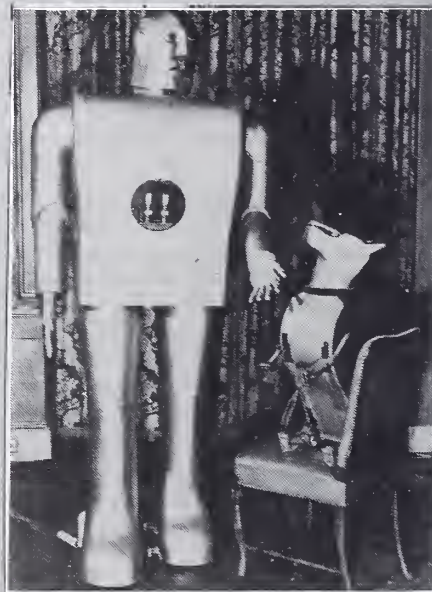
Meanwhile, several projects previously reported in these pages have not been idling on the shelf:

Peter Kinoy of Skylight Pictures reports that *Nicaragua: Report from the Front*, written and directed by Deborah Shaffer, Tom Sigel and Pam Yates received such an enthusiastic reception at the Film Forum in New York that it was moved, along with *When the Mountains Tremble*—another

*Choose Life*: "A frankly pro-peace, pro-activist film" that's optimistic about the future.

Current releases by AIVF independents embroider upon the themes of disarmament and human rights. Filmmakers John Bishop and Robbie Leppzer of Media Generation have completed *Choose Life*, a 10-minute 16mm film intended for use by grassroots peace organizers and as a short subject to accompany longer films. *Choose Life* mixes interviews and music from the June 12 rally to create a frankly pro-peace, pro-activist film that is positive about the prospects for disarmament. *Choose Life* is distributed by Green Mountain Post.

*Personas Desplazadas: The Miskito Indian Refugees* presents another aspect of the plight of indigenous peoples caught in the middle of ideological power struggles in Central America. This time it's the Miskito Indians of northeastern Nicaragua. Displaced to Honduras by internal pressures caused by the Sandinista revolution, these 12,000 refugees have become the focus of further pressure from US-backed anti-Sandinista forces who wish to use the Miskito situation to sway political opinion against the Nicaraguan government. Produced and directed by John Caldwell, the 25-minute color videotape was shot on location on the Nicaraguan/Honduras border and includes footage of Miskito refugee camps, resettlement villages, foreign relief agency ac-



Tom Johnson/Lance Bird

*The World of Tomorrow*: Electro the Moto Man and his mechanical dog Sparko at the 1939 World's Fair.



Skylight production—to the Agee Room at the Bleecker St. Cinema. Following this, the films will go into national distribution.

*Seeing Red*, a documentary about the early days of the American Communist Party, produced by James Klein and Julia Reichert, has been nominated for an Academy Award. The film received its New York City premiere March 8 at the Entermidia Theatre. Hosted by Media Network, which has coordinated opening night events in Manhattan for such alternative history films as *The Atomic Cafe* and *Rosie the Riveter*, the benefit screening was followed by a party on New York's terminally gentrifying Lower East Side. The film then began its theatrical run at Walter Reade's New Yorker Theater.

*In Our Hands*, the collaborative documentary film project covering the massive 1983 June 12 anti-nuclear rally in NYC, opened at the Film Forum on February 18. This 90-minute color film produced by Robert Richter and Stan Warnow is a labor of love for the 350 film and videomakers who donated their time and skills to the project. Forty-one production crews covered different aspects of the day which began with a march through the streets of New York, culminating in a gathering of nearly one million protestors, speakers and performers in Central Park. Even with deferred labor costs, the budget for *In Our Hands* reached \$150,000 and the chances of recovering any substantial amount of the costs are slim, according to a Richter Productions staff member. However, the monetary losses are apparently offset by the importance of documenting the largest public outcry against the nuclear arms race in the history of the peace movement.

Callopie Film Resources



Revolutionary history: Daniel Shays (l) and Job Shattuck (r) in *A Little Rebellion Now and Then*

### OTHER VOICES

Lest this column leave readers with the impression that the only place to find an independent is Central America or the government archives, consider the examples of these very diverse films:

*Ossian: An American Boy in Nepal*, a first film by Thomas Anderson, is a half-hour documentary about an unusual child from Great Barrington, MA who chose to enter a Buddhist monastery at the age of four. At seven, the order "recognized" him as the reincarnation of a High Tibetan Lama whose American (re)birth had been prophesied by the leader of the order several years prior to the boy's appearance in Nepal on a trip with his parents. Anderson completed the principal photography for the film in a two-month period in Nepal after obtaining special permission to film inside the monastery. Back in the US, the film was transferred to one-inch tape and edited. It was broadcast February 13 on San Francisco's KQED-Ch 9.

Documentarian Fred Salaff of New York City's Dokumenta Productions is distributing *In the Mainstream: The Cleveland Quartet*. Salaff personally financed the 52-minute 16mm work about a chamber music group chosen to perform with four Stradivarius violins which, according to their dealer, can never be separated. Salaff earned a degree in cello and composition from the University of Texas before becoming a filmmaker. *In the Mainstream* premiered at the Carnegie Hall Cinema on November 22, 1983.

And finally, experimental filmmaker James Irwin of San Francisco has completed *The Role of the Observer*, a 57-minute 16mm color work composed of found footage which explores film's relationship to audience, the sensual qualities of the film image, the history of experimental film, the visceral impact of sound and various aspects of growing up in the 50's. A fragmented narrative which pretends to be autobiographical, *The Role*

of the Observer asks audiences ("observers") to examine themselves, who they have been and their "roles" in the process of change, including sexual and social roles now and in childhood.

### SHOESTRING FILM WOOS WATERBURY

In the fiction feature department, as Dorothy discovered on her trip to Oz, sometimes the best deal is in your own backyard. Filmmaker Gorman Bechard, a native of Waterbury, CT recently completed a 95-minute narrative entitled *Disconnected*, produced in and around his hometown, utilizing mainly local talent, technical support and production resources. Bechard reports that the town and surrounding areas were extremely helpful; Waterbury's civic pride and the commitment of a loyal crew and cast who worked without salary during six weekends of production were factors helping Bechard keep his initial production costs down to \$26,000. Now, theater manager Mario Zazarro has agreed to open *Disconnected* at Waterbury's Plaza 1234 Cinema, whose screens are usual reserved for Hollywood fare. Shot in 16mm, *Disconnected* is being blown up to 35mm for the April 12 opening.

Based on a short story written by a friend, Bechard describes his film as a psychological thriller of sibling rivalry and the sometimes dangerous games people play. Following its Waterbury premiere, Bechard hopes to place the film into commercial distribution.



The best deal: *Disconnected*, shot with local cast and crew, was a product of Waterbury's "civic pride."

Courtesy Filmmaker



James Irwin's *The Role of the Observer* explores the nature of childhood and film in a fragmented narrative.



**GET ACTIVE****Join an AIVF Committee**

Committee work is the engine that drives organizations like AIVF, and gives them power beyond their immediate resources.

AIVF committees have helped forge and implement policies regarding Advocacy, Membership, Development and our educational programs. Work with your most active colleagues and with AIVF's board and staff to achieve our goals together. For more information, or to join a committee, write or call AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th Floor, NY NY 10012, (212) 473-3400.

**MEMBER DISCOUNTS**

AIVF is pleased to announce the initiation of a discount program of film and video production services for its members in the New York area. The companies listed below will offer discounts to AIVF members upon presentation of a membership card. We hope that this program will foster closer cooperation between independent producers and companies that provide production services.

**20/20 Productions****Tom Garber**

174 Spring St.  
New York (212) 966-2971

10% discount on all ¾" and ½" shooting packages.  
Editing facilities also available. Please call for current rates.

**TVC Labs****Roseann Schaeffer, VP Sales**

311 West 43 St.  
New York (212) 397-8600

Negotiable discounts on services.

**Camera Mart****Leo Rosenberg, Rental Manager**

456 West 55 St.  
New York (212) 757-6977

20% discount on all rentals of film and video equipment, with some specific exceptions. Larger discounts may be available for rentals of long duration or for favorable payment terms.

**Rafik**

814 Broadway  
New York (212) 475-9110

25% discount on straight rental of screening room, rentals on cameras and sales of used videocassettes. 15% discount on use of editing facilities. All other supplies at discount rates; special deals available.

**Rough Cut Video Services****Jack Walworth**

129 West 22 St.  
New York (212) 242-1914

10% across-the-board discount on all services, including ¾" productions, ¾" editing and VHS to ¾" transfers.

AIVF would like to thank these companies for participating. Any other firms who wish to be included, please call (212) 473-3400.

**Association of Independent  
Video and Filmmakers, Inc.**  
**ADVISORY BOARD**

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**Jesus Trevino**  
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**Claudia Weill**  
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London Film Festival

interested in action, crime, science fiction & western, etc. One "star" must be in film. 5-yr. contracts w/2 yr. TV holdback for German-speaking area of Europe including cassette & disk. Payment outright and/or advance & royalty. Contact: Jonny Chen, VP International Operations, GFV Gesellschaft fur Video mbh, Geibelstrabe 36, d-4000 Dusseldorf, W. Germany; tel: 02-1168-2110.

● **NEW FILMS SOUGHT:** For Greater Boston Fatherhood Forum, June 16, 1984. Sponsored by Wheelock College, Boston & Bank Street School, NYC. Forum seeks films dealing w/any aspect of fathers or fathering, particularly new vs. traditional roles, relationships between fathers & adult children, etc. 1 of 6 simultaneous forums throughout country, event will be attended by professionals, researchers & service providers as well as interested fathers & other individuals. Contact: Ben Achtenberg, Fanlight Prod., 47 Halifax St., Boston MA 02130, (617) 524-0980.

● **FOX/LORBER ASSOCIATES**, specialist in TV marketing & distribution, expanding feature film library for representation. Interested in full-length English-language films w/primarily narrative structure for sale to pay TV/cable, broadcast & home video, both domestic & foreign. Minimum length: 60 min.; no subtitles. Contact: Ericka Markman, Fox/Lorber Assoc., 79 Madison Ave., Ste. 601, NY NY 10016, (212) 686-6777.

● **PELICAN FILMS** distributes films to health care profession, but short films & tapes for all markets welcome. Alternatives to traditional distribution arrangements offered. Contact: Arthur Hoyle, Pelican Films, 3010 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 440, Santa Monica CA 90404, (213) 399-3753.

● **SHORT VIDEOTAPES** wanted for spring/summer NY shows. Can offer small payments, aimable context & crack public relations. Women's Performance Art Video (excerpts from live presentations, documents OK too). New Black Video—Call for hidden talent; the never-been-seens, the just-starting-outs, the too-shy-to-calls, etc. This means you. Deadline: Ap. 20, 1984. Send videotapes under 15 minutes for consideration to Hulser, AIVF, 625 Broadway, NY NY 10012. (Please include return stamped mailer.)

● **DISTRIBUTOR** of 16mm environmental issue films looking for new titles for developing

catalogue. Contact: Umbrella Films, 60 Blake Rd., Brookline MA 02146, (617) 277-6639.

● **CHANNEL L** seeks 16mm color films & ¾" color tapes, broadcast quality, 25-58 min. on topics relating specifically to social, political, civic, cultural issues of interest to Manhattan dwellers. Do not phone or send films or tapes. Write: Director, Channel L Working Group, Inc., 51 Chambers St. Rm. 532, NY NY 10007.

**Freelancers**

● **CHOREOGRAPHER** w/experience in video & film seeks opportunities to design movement, sound, visuals or effects for your production. Contact: Vicki Stern, (212) 924-8299/473-3753, NY.

● **WRITER/RESEARCHER** w/credits *USIA*, Group W & corporations seeks freelance/part-time work. Extraordinary knowledge & contacts in scientific, technological, medical & related areas of government, academic & industry. Contact: N. Kagan, (212) 254-1120, NY.

● **STORY/SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT:** Extensive experience in presentation & proposal writing; analysis & research of scripts on all topics for TV series, movies, docs. Call: (212) 677-7832, NY.

● **APPRENTICE EDITOR:** Experience in video; can work for low pay if production provides learning experience. Contact: Sasha, (212) 222-3342, NY.

● **PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT:** Can offer assistance in development, publicity campaigns, developing marketing & promotional materials. Contact: Kristen Simone, (212) 289-8299, NY.

● **VIDEOGRAPHER** w/ new Sony DXC-M3 3-tube camera ready to shoot docs, dance & other projects. Deck, mics, accessories & crew as needed; rates negotiable. Contact: L. Goodsmith, (212) 898-8157, NY.

● **GAFFER** available for docs, low-budget features & shorts. 12 yrs. experience in theater, video & film. Contact: Chris, (212) 499-3219, NY.

● **ASST. ART DIRECTOR** currently freelancing in print seeks work in production design. Some film experience. Resume, portfolio available. Contact: Eva, (212) 724-3879, NY.



● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** w/Arri 16SR, fast lenses & lights. Fluent in French, Spanish. Negotiable rates. Contact: Pedro Bonilla, (212) 662-1913, NY.

● **NEWS CREW AVAILABLE** w/16mm & ¾" production gear. Professional credits on request. Contact: Pacific St. Films, 630 Ninth Ave., NY NY 10036, (212) 875-9722.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** for fiction, documentary. Fully equipped including Aaton 7LTR, Cooke 10.4-52, 16 or S16, Super Speed, L. T1.3. Reasonable rates. Contact: Igor Sunara, (212) 249-0416, NY.

● **PENNY WARD/VIDEO:** Rentals—Sony DXC-1800 camera, Beta 1 Portapak mic & monitor w/operator, \$150/day; same w/VO-4800 deck, \$175/day. Transfers—½" Beta to ¾", \$10/hr. Viewing—½" Beta & ¾", \$5/hr. Editor—\$10/hr. Call: (212) 228-1427, NY.

● **CAMERA ASSISTANT** w/Aaton 7 LTR for hire. Lighting & grip package available. Contact: John, (914) 473-0633, NY.

● **RESEARCHER:** Access & familiarity w/all NYC libraries & Library of Congress in DC. Efficient & meticulous w/background in history, political economy & filmmaking. Rate negotiable. Contact: Danny, (212) 924-4711, NY.

● **CAMERA OPERATOR/ASSISTANT** w/Eclair ACL & Angenieux 12-120mm. Call: Denise Brassard, (212) 925-2531, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/16mm Aaton & lights available to work w/independents on doc & narrative films. Negotiable rates. Contact: East Marion Films, (212) 420-0335, NY.

● **ASSISTANT/APPRENTICE SOUND EDITOR:** Available immediately for work. Have worked on several independent projects. Call: Adam Groden, (516) 796-3233, NY.

● **WHY NOT HAVE AWARD-WINNING COMPOS. S & PRODUCERS SCORE YOUR NEXT PROJECT?** Original electronic music for AV, film & commercials. Fully equipped 16-track studio featuring complete electronic facilities & original music library. Contact: Peter Fish, Benjamin Goldstein, (212) 581-2305, NY.

● **COMING OUT WEST?** NY indies planning to

## RE: New Able Resource

**FIVE's** new Production Resources File is stuffed with goodies: screenplays, actors'/techies' resumes, info on post/production equipment, studios/spaces, production companies, publications, events/conferences, computers, satellites & cable. Come in & consult it, or send contributions/suggestions to the attention of Mary Guzzey.

shoot in northern California or Bay area can save time & money by contacting Karil Daniels to coordinate most effective, least expensive shoot possible. 10 years experience w/San Francisco independent film community. Contacts to quality freelance crew members, locations, equipment, services & supplies at best rates. Contact: Point of View Prods., 2477 Folsom St., San Francisco CA 94110; (415) 821-0435.

● **NEGATIVE MATCHING:** A & B rolls cut, scenes pulled for opticals, etc. Color & b&w, reversal, negative stocks. Reliable service, reasonable rates. Call: (212) 786-6278, NY.

● **GOT A RIGHTS PROBLEM?** Want to use recording, film footage, obtain music license, get rights to literary work or photo? Barbara Zimmerman's service provides solutions to these problems & more. Special free initial consultation for readers who mention they saw this ad in *The Independent*. Contact: Barbara Zimmerman, 145 West 86 St., NY NY 10024; (212) 580-0615.

● **OMNI PROPS:** Specializing in design & construction of strange, unusual props & set pieces for film, video, photography. Contact: Richard Sands, 179 Grand St., Brooklyn NY 11211; (212) 387-3744.

● **PENNY WARD/VIDEO:** Documentation of dance, theater workshops & performances. Collaboration & consultation; ex-dancer sympathetic to dancers' needs. Video for dance research projects. Video resumes of choreography for grant applications. Contact: Penny Ward, (212) 228-1427, NY.

## Opportunities • Gigs

● **DOCUMENTARY IN PRODUCTION,** *The Rise & Fall of the Borscht Belt*, seeks NYC-based

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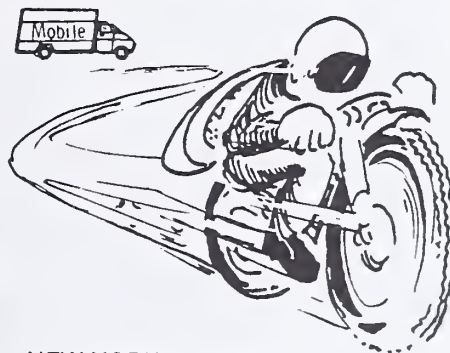
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person for additional research into Jewish-American experience. Deferred payment only. Contact: Peter Davis, (914) 434-5579, NY.

● **INTERNSHIPS AT COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA:** Applications for Fall '84 accepted May 1-June 15, 1984. Positions available in workshop/seminars, events program, publications, publicity, touring program, production asst. & arts administration. Send brief resume, 2 recommendation letters & cover letter describing skills & reasons for applying. Contact: Kate Flax, (212) 925-3926 Mon.-Thurs. 10 am-6 pm.

● **PRODUCTION ASSISTANT & ASSISTANT PRODUCER** wanted to work w/experienced filmmaker on production of a partially funded arts documentary for PBS. Contact: East Marion Films, (212) 420-0335, NY.

## Publications

● **ALTERNATIVE VIEWS PROGRAM CATALOG** documents 5 years of progressive public access programming in Austin TX. Lists 200 programs including interviews w/social change activists on subjects distorted or censored by mass media. \$3.95/ea. Contact: Alternative Views, PO Box 7279-N, Austin TX 78712.

● **NATIONAL DATA BOOK:** 8th edition; comprehensive source of information on 21,759 private grantmaking foundations & 208 community foundations. New listing of all active private operating organizations that conduct own charitable activities rather than granting to other organizations. Comprehensive bibliography of state & local grantmakers directories. Arranged by zip code, includes separate alphabetical index volume. \$50. Contact: The Foundation Center, 888 Seventh Ave., NY NY 10106, (800) 424-9836, toll-free.

● **1984 FAIRS & FESTIVALS IN NORTHEAST:** Covers 400 special arts events in New England, NY, NJ, PA, DE & MD. Includes dates, application information, contact persons. \$4. Contact: Festival Listing, Arts Extension Svc., Division of Continuing Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA 01003.

● **KNOWLEDGE INDUSTRY PUBLICATIONS** complete 1984 catalog lists periodicals, books & other services of this leading information industry publisher. Titles include *Video Editing & Post-Production: A Professional Guide* by Gary H. Anderson, \$34.95, *The Cable/Broadband Communications Book* by Mary Louise Howell, \$29.95, *The Video Age: TV Technology & Applications in the 1980's*, \$29.95. Contact: KIP, 701 Westchester Ave., White Plains NY 10604, (914) 328-9157.

## Resources • Funds

● **NEA** proposals for audiovisual & film projects in category of Design Communications. Deadline: May 25, 1984. Contact: NEA, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NY, Washington DC 20506, (202) 682-5452.

● **GLOBAL VILLAGE** announces 2nd round of 1983-84 Facilities Grants to video artists in NY, NJ & CT. Grants awarded in equipment & time allow 2-3 artists use of Global Village production & post-production facilities for completion of video works-in-progress aimed at broadcast. Executive producing services including production & distribution aid & promotion services. Application

deadline: April 16, 1984. Contact: Julie Pantelick, Global Village, 454 Broome St., NY NY 10013, (212) 966-7526.

● **LIGHTING, GRIP EQUIPMENT REPAIR/MAINTENANCE:** Design special rigs & accessories. Experienced w/HMI lighting units; 4 yrs. experience w/Elmack dollies. Contact: Chris, (212) 499-3219, NY.

● **WHEN YOU'RE SHOOTING IN NY:** Key Light productions, independent film & video producers, can furnish you w/complete production or support staff; researchers, writers, PAs, camera-people & crews. Our credits include network, PBS, independent & industrial productions. Call: Beth, (212) 581-9748, NY.

## Coming Attractions

- *An American Way of Playing: Feature \$\$ at PBS' American Playhouse*
- *Stereo Sound On Location*
- *Legal Talk: Financial Set-Ups For Filmmakers*
- *Hawaii Video*
- *Festivals: San Sebastian, PhilaFilm, Sinking Creek, San Francisco Gay, Margaret Mead*

## In upcoming issues of THE INDEPENDENT

● **LEGAL SERVICES:** Experienced entertainment lawyer specializing in independent productions. Reasonable rates. Contact: Paula Schaap, (212) 777-6361/460-5015, NY.

● **SUPERVIDEO:** California videocassette retail & equipment sales outlet has variety of activities for video enthusiasts including regular production workshops, videotape club, production & publication of "VideoSpeak" newsletter for members & non-members. Contact: Nissim Raphael, Pres., SuperVideo, 417 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica CA 90401.

## Trims • Glitches

● **PRICELESS NEGATIVES** stored in J&D Laboratories, Inc. vaults will be purged to make room for new jobs. Materials inactive over 5 years should be claimed, or notify J&D Lab w/disposition instructions by May 1, 1984. Please be able to substantiate ownership rights. Contact: J&D Labs, Inc., 12 West 21 St., NY NY 10010, (212) 691-5613.

● **CONGRATULATIONS TO DARA BIRNBAUM,** whose 5-channel video & sound installation, *PM Magazine*, was presented in New

American Filmmaking Series at Whitney Museum of Modern Art, Feb. 4-March 4.

● **CONGRATULATIONS TO AIVF MEMBERS** selected for funding in CPB Open Solicitation category: Development funds to Helena Solberg Ladd & Diego Echeverria of NYC for *Latin America: The Awakening Colossus*; production funds to Jim Brown of Putnam Valley, NY for *Woody Guthrie: A Musical Biography* & Stevenson Palfi of New Orleans for *Setting the Record Straight*, a survey of success in the US pop music world featuring Papa John Creach. Round II proposal deadlines were scheduled to be announced in late March, 1984. Contact: CPB, Open Solicitation, 1111 16 St. NW, Washington DC 20036, (202) 293-6160.

● **PORTLAND RESIDENTS ONLY:** Arts Channel will award \$2000 grants to proposals demonstrating innovative uses of television for new cable series, *Video Verite: The Art of TV*. Seeking proposals on art of interactive 2-way TV, computer graphics animation, live from multiple locations, studio special effects. Contact: Ed Geis, Arts Coord., Cablesystems Pacific, 3075 NE Sandy, Portland OR 97232.

● **CPB PROGRAM STAFF PLAYS MUSICAL CHAIRS:** Former coordinator of panels and proposals, Eloise Payne, has left CPB to assume position of Program Coordinator at Labor Institute for Public Affairs. Pat King will take over panel & proposal responsibilities & has been promoted to manager of Program Fund operations from budget/administration manager. Don Marbury, former associate director of cultural & general programs is now associate director of cultural & children's programs, while Jennifer Lawson has been promoted from program coordinator to associate director of drama & arts programs. Ann Reed, formerly of NPR, PBS & CPB Broadcast Services has become manager of planning & reports, a position created to fill vacancy left by Payne.

● **ASIA SOCIETY PRESENTS FILM FRIDAYS:** Series of feature films from & about Asia to be screened on Fridays beginning April 6 with *My Memories of Old Beijing* directed by Wu Yigong, first official Academy Award entry from People's Republic of China. April 13, *The Lin Family Shop* directed by Shui Hua; April 20, *The Teahouse* by Xie Tian; April 27, *Rickshaw Bow* by Ling Zifeng. In May, Satyajit Ray's *Calcutta Trilogy* will be screened & in June, 4 western films dealing w/Asian themes. All screenings take place at the Asia Society, Wallace Auditorium, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St., 8 pm. \$4 non-members, \$3 members, students, senior citizens. Call: (212) 288-6400, NY.

● **CONGRATULATIONS TO AIVF MEMBERS** awarded production/completion grants from American Film Institute Independent Filmmaker Program: In documentary category: Tom Davenport of Delaplane VA & Mira Nair of NY. In drama category: Nicholas Hondrogen & Louis Yansen of NY. An additional grant awarded to Bob Rosen of NY. Applications for 1985 cycle accepted in September, 1984. Contact: AFI, Independent Filmmaker Program, 2021 No. Western Ave., PO Box 2799, LA CA 90027, (213) 856-7696.

● **ERRATUM:** *The Independent* erroneously called Gerald Vizenor the director of *Harold of Orange* (In/Out Production, Dec. 1983). The correct credit should be Gerald Vizenor, screenplay & Richard Weise, director. ■



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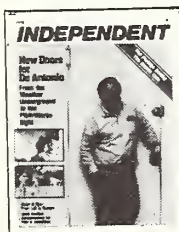


## INDEPENDENT & UNITED AT THE SAME TIME?

As an independent video or filmmaker, you've decided to work "outside the system"—which means you need a community of peers even more. *The Association of Independent Video & Filmmakers (AIVF)* is such a community. As the national trade association for independent producers, *AIVF* represents your needs and goals to government, industry and the general public. After eight years of testifying before Congress, lobbying the public TV system, and working through media coalitions to preserve and strengthen cable access, we've proven that together we have a voice people *must* & *do* listen to.

Along with our sister organization, the *Foundation for Independent Video & Film (FIVF)*, we also offer you a wealth of concrete services:

- ★ Comprehensive health insurance at affordable rates
- ★ The Independent Magazine, our film & video monthly
- ★ FIVF's Festival Bureau, providing foreign & domestic liaison
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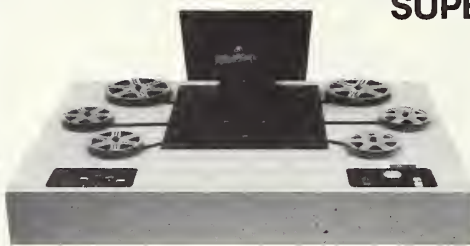
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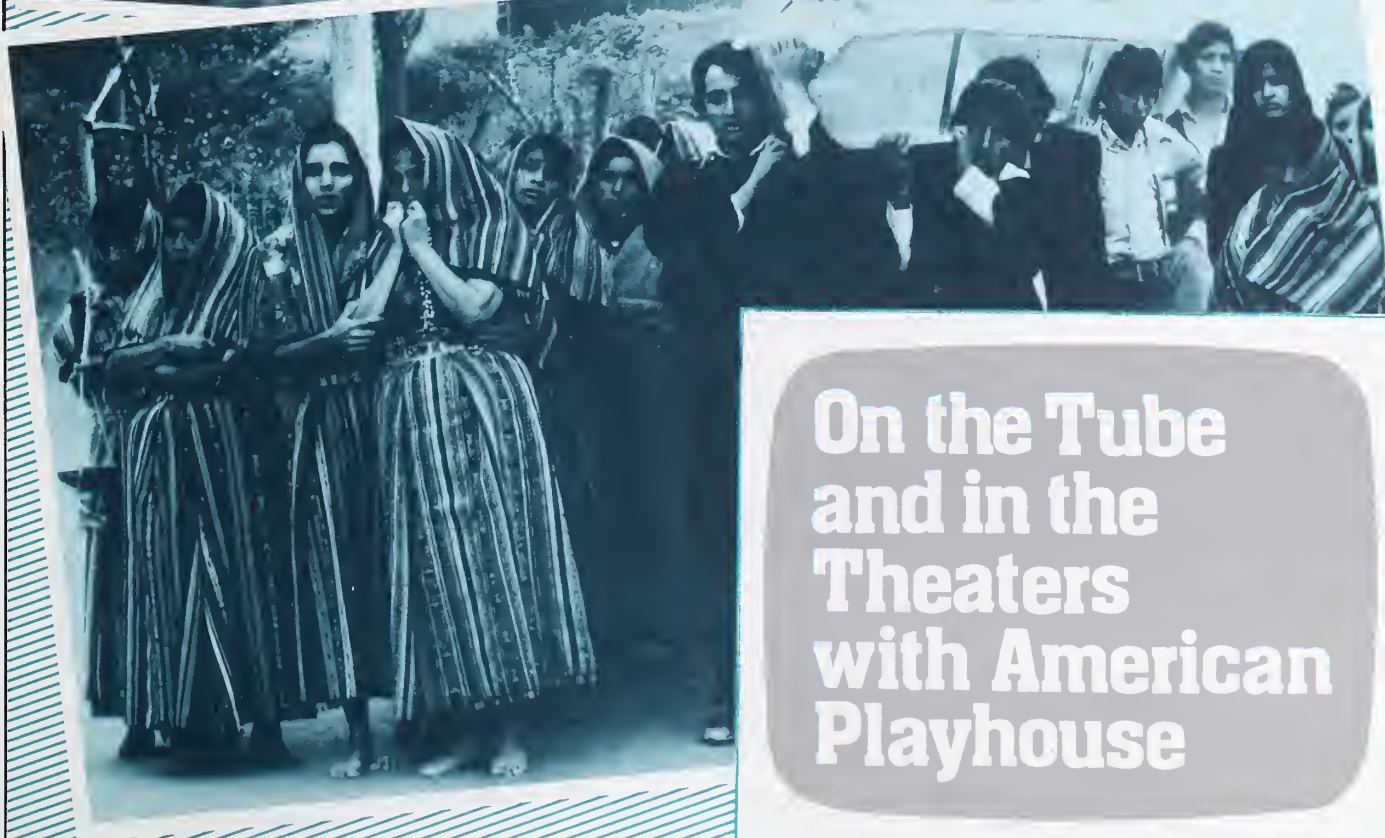
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# THE INDEPENDENT

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**Associate Editors:** Susan Linfield,  
Renee Tajima

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Mary Guzzy

COVER: Greg Nava and Anna Thomas' "El Norte" and Lynne Littman's "Testament" are two film projects made for American Playhouse that have won theatrical release prior to broadcast.

## EDITORIAL

Two articles in this issue, *American Playhouse* and *British Channel Four*, invite comparison of programming policies on both sides of the Atlantic. In England, where the new *Channel Four* operates in a public broadcasting context, programmers have developed new and fertile relationships with independents of every ilk—from documentarians to art filmmakers to personal essayists. In the US, where airspace for non-commercial projects is scarcer, the nearly three-year-old *American Playhouse* slot on PBS is deemphasizing its original teleplay concept in favor of feature film projects.

These two program funders and broadcasters have contrasting attitudes that have consequences for independent filmmakers. *Alan Fountain* stresses unusual content and style, and tries to air work which reflects the current concerns of filmmakers in the field. *American Playhouse* emphasizes suitability for audiences when selecting projects. The comments made at the 1983 review session of the *American Playhouse* advisory panel define some of the resulting problems: "Playhouse is the steamtable of drama... it lacks consistency, texture, style and content... (Season II) projected a sense of 'earnest realism'... Playhouse should be about writers, not movies... they should not

be pretending to make 'movies of the week'... They need to go to writers and producers **directly**... find the writer's 'dream product'... *American Playhouse* is becoming a museum... the themes have lacked currency, they are old-fashioned. They must take risks."

While *Playhouse* has been edging toward a closer relationship with independent filmmakers, it still seems stuck in a straight dramatic mold. Watching it, you would never know that America is a culturally innovative place—nor would you guess that films by young Americans are eliciting excited reactions from Seattle to Berlin to Tokyo. When is *Playhouse* going to go for a music film (*Wild Style*, *Crossover Dreams*), or the punksters (*Vortex*, *King Blank*, *Android*, *Emerald Cities*), or the experimental directors (Haile Gerima, Yvonne Rainer, Mark Rappaport), or the emerging black filmmakers of demonstrated talent (Charles Burnett, Julie Dash), or even regional plays into television (*Red Fox*, *Second Hangin'* from Kentucky)? If *Playhouse* is anemic, it's not due to a scarcity of risky material. As both makers and watchers of fiction, we would like to see it look for an identity beyond the white picket fence of middle-brow drama.

—The Editor



## MEDIA CLIPS

# Waste Dumper Dumps on Indie

DEBRA GOLDMAN

Lawsuits have become America's favorite way of getting even. Mistresses trying to collect cash from their lovers' widows, corporate giants hoping to swallow up other corporate giants and crime victims left unsatisfied by the criminal justice system all pour into civil court to redress their grievances. Is the real aim of these proliferating lawsuits always to collect the millions of dollars demanded by the plaintiff? Or are the legal fees, time and anxiety the suit costs the defendant sometimes revenge enough?

One unwilling victim of litigation is Nicolas Kaufman. The Boston-area independent produced *Hazardous Waste*, a documentary on the toxic waste disposal problem in various parts of the country. Youngstown, New York was one focus of his film; there Kaufman examined the role of SCA Chemical Waste Service, a Massachusetts-based firm which operates in the NY city. Officials at SCA who saw the film were not pleased with it, and decided to make their displeasure known. Last November, SCA filed a defamation suit in Massachusetts against Nicolas Kaufman Productions, Earth-rise Productions and the film's shipper, Transit Media. PBS, which broadcast *Hazardous Waste* last summer, is not being sued (although SCA has filed a "personal attack complaint" against PBS with the FCC); apparently SCA wanted to concentrate its ire on the smaller entities. As balm for its outrage, SCA is seeking \$18,750,000 in damages.

At presstime, Kaufman's lawyers were reportedly trying to work out a settlement with

SCA. Whatever the outcome, SCA has certainly made its point. While Kaufman's legal fees are covered by an insurance policy, the battle has taken its toll. Kaufman reports that he has missed days at work and was delayed in finishing a proposal for his next film, which is now three months behind schedule. It's enough to give pause to other filmmakers who might criticize multi-million dollar corporations—all of which routinely swallow huge legal fees as part of the "normal" cost of doing business. A filmmaker may have the best case in the world—but it's going to cost a lot to prove it in court.

Perhaps the most unlikely player in this legal drama is Transit Media, a film shipping service in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey which many independent distributors (such as New Day Films and Direct Cinema Limited) use. The suit names Transit Media as "distributor" of *Hazardous Waste*, a label that Transit Media's owner Else Logan says is inaccurate. "I don't view films and decide which ones to carry and which not," Logan insists. "Our job is to get prints to where they're supposed to be when they're supposed to be there. When the films are returned, we do an electronic inspection, and then ship them out again." Neither she nor her staff has ever seen *Hazardous Waste*. "We don't even own a projector! For example, we ship a film called *Putting Up the Pickles*. I haven't the vaguest idea of what that one's about."

The strain of the suit comes during a period of declining business, due to the nationwide softening of the 16mm market. Last year Lo-

gan borrowed \$25,000 to buy Transit Media's electronic inspection machine, and, had she been forced to cover defense costs herself, "We definitely would be out of business. There is no way that I could borrow against accounts receivable. This is a small business; we're basically a bunch of housewives. I am angry, but there's nothing I can do. I feel very victimized."

The film's actual distributors are Kaufman himself, and, since January, Direct Cinema. Shortly after the suit was filed, Kaufman stopped distributing *Hazardous Waste* so his lawyers could take a good look at it. Direct Cinema's Mitchell Block says that there was also a delay on his end in promoting the documentary, but by March the film was back in distribution. Block is no stranger to civil court himself. Last year, as distributor of the Canadian film *If You Love This Planet*, he challenged the government's right to label a film "propaganda," and won. However, the *Hazardous Waste* suit worries him. "This is a completely different situation from the one we faced with *If You Love This Planet*. Suits like this could actually inhibit the production of certain kinds of films. For a lot of independent filmmakers, the implications are very frightening."

## High Hopes for Low Power At St. Croix Media Center

The station's licensee, the Caribbean Center unlikely site for a television center. The cool, luminous glow of the TV screen would appear to be no match for year-round sunshine, pink sands and warm Caribbean seas. But the 50,000 people who make their home in this tourist paradise, along with the 50,000 more who reside in the neighboring US-owned islands, live in the video age just like the rest of us. Far away from the New York-Los Angeles axis of the entertainment industry, they have an acute need for television that reflects their unique, ocean-bound community. This month islanders finally have a station of their own. On April 29, the low-power station TV45AB began broadcasting to the Caribbean.

The station's licensee, the Caribbean Center for Understanding Media, is an alternative media center of the '70s which has successfully negotiated the transition to the entrepreneurial '80s. It was founded in 1974 by Adema Hackshaw, Paul Deare, Beth Deare and Cassandra Allsop as a community training center and local production house. With grants from the Virgin Islands Council for the Arts and the NEA, the center developed a three-camera studio with \$125,000 of broadcast-quality equipment including Ikegami and JVC cameras and a full complement of field production hardware which it leases to the community at non-profit rates.

Over the years, Allsop and the Deares have moved into other kinds of media work. Hackshaw remained to oversee the Center's successful transformation from community producer to island broadcaster. He credits this



*Hazardous Waste* focuses on community solutions to a national problem—and landed its producer a lawsuit.



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On the set of *Laborvision*, a weekly newsmagazine show carried by CableLINE.

accomplishment to "staying on top of things and having very good lawyers." The center began investigating the possibilities of LPTV in the Virgin Islands in 1980, when it applied for and won a Minority Telecommunications Feasibility Grant of \$5,000 from CPB. Hackshaw admits that anyone who paused to blink missed out on this brief grant opportunity: "By the time most eligible people found out about the grant, CPB had stopped giving it." The sum was applied to legal fees and engineering studies needed for an FCC application. The Center had the right credentials for relatively speedy approval by the FCC: location in an area "underserved" by television, minority ownership and a solid track record of community involvement.

The new station's signal reaches the whole of St. Croix, and will be microwaved to St. Thomas and Puerto Rico. Economic necessity dictates that a fair portion of its ambitious 10-15 hour broadcast day will be filled with programming acquired from the mainland. Here, too, Hackshaw is on top of all available opportunities, noting, "There's a lot of free programming around, and a lot you can barter for." Among the locally produced programs, TV45AB will broadcast made-in-St. Croix magazine and news shows, as well as concentrating on programming for children and senior citizens, audiences usually ignored by commercial producers. And since no '80s television schedule is complete without music video, it too, will be part of the programming mix, featuring local VJs.

Hackshaw estimates the first year's budget at \$350,000, of which \$200,000 will pay for transmission equipment, with the remainder covering operating expenses. Much of this money will come from commercial loans. But after years of working within non-profit budgets, Hackshaw is confident the station will survive financially through the sale of spot time. "At \$30 a spot," he says, "you can make a lot of money." In light of all the disappoint-

ments suffered by LPTV advocates in the last couple of years, he believes St. Croix TV will prove that low power is a workable enterprise, declaring, "Low-power TV stations are the direction that media centers all over should be going in. And we did it!" —DG

### **Union Communications: Indies Work for Labor TV**

While front page news of the union movement grows ever more gloomy, reports on labor tucked away in the entertainment section are very upbeat these days. Unions have moved into video. In the face of shrinking membership rolls, faltering political influence and legalized union-busting courtesy of the bankruptcy courts, organized labor is attempting to establish itself as a power where it counts: on television.

The term "labor television" covers a variety of activities, reaching back to the mid-seventies when the ILGWU set America humming to "Look for the Union Label." Today labor television means social issue spot ads created by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the public affairs shows produced by the American Federation of Teachers and Communication Workers of America. It encompasses teleconferencing, videocassettes and increasing union investment in television studios and video equipment. But its glitziest manifestations yet are the efforts of the Labor Institute of Public Affairs (LIPA) to create commercial programming about labor for a national audience.

Created by the AFL-CIO in 1981, LIPA resulted from organized labor's growing awareness that working people were a rare sight on American television; when workers did make an appearance, they were most likely represented as strikers throwing rocks at delivery trucks or phalanxes of telephone

workers trying to get the vote out for their candidate. LIPA was created to offer an alternative vision of labor. As Nick DeMartino, LIPA's director of marketing and distribution, observes, "You're not part of the national debate unless you're seen on TV."

Last summer LIPA made its programming debut in the broadcast syndication market with *America Works*, a public affairs series produced with all the visual pizzazz an editing session at Reeves Teletape can buy. Each of the 12 shows focused on a broad social issue in which union members are involved: health care, voter registration, pay equity. The half-hour programs combined a short documentary, an animated "information" segment and a studio discussion. Six of the 12 minidocs in the series were field-produced by outside independents—stalwart allies wherever production budgets are tight.

In light of the backgrounds of LIPA's staff, the reliance on independents is a natural one. Many are independent producers themselves with administrative experience in indie-linked institutions. Executive director Larry Kirkman set up the American Film Institute's Video and Television Services department, while DeMartino has a background in public TV and was largely responsible for writing the Carnegie Commission's 1979 report on public television. On the production side, department head David Weiner is another AFI Video and Television Services veteran as well as founder of Washington DC's Interface Video. Familiarity with the indie scene helped make their working relationships with producers fairly painless. New York independent Eric Breitbart went to Boston for LIPA to document the legislative battle over "right-to-know" laws (which require employers to disclose toxic materials present in the workplace). He reports that "as a work-for-hire experience, it was definitely one of the better ones."

Thanks to a word-of-mouth recommendation, Breitbart's working arrangements with LIPA were made over the phone, without the aggravation of proving his credentials. "LIPA was very specific about what it wanted," he says. "The piece was to focus on a 'hero,' a union person actively involved in a community issue." LIPA had final say over the shape of the documentary, but Breitbart says, "They did pay me to spend two days in Washington editing the piece, which I felt was pretty fair."

Breitbart's version, however, was never aired. One problem was that despite local union assurances that the Massachusetts legislature would act on the bill while the LIPA crew was in town, the vote never materialized. "Our intention in the *America Works* documentaries was to follow a small part of a larger continuous story from start to finish," producer Weiner explains. "We had to improvise because we didn't get that in Boston. Eric edited the material in a fairly free style, which we liked, but, in light of our needs for the series as a whole, we ended up cutting it into something more narrative."

After its syndication run, *America Works*



## Capital Resources

Looking for a location in Louisiana? Crying for a crew in Colorado? Aching to edit in Alaska? The enterprising staff of AIVF has compiled a library of production information from US state and city film commissions. Helpful resources include maps, hotel and restaurant guides, photo essays of available locations, addresses and phone numbers of union locals, production companies, equipment rental and talent agencies. Even animals and airplanes can be found. Many film commissions provide free liaison and information services. Most have toll-free numbers. Directories are on file at AIVF for reference only.

got a second life as a part of CableLINE, LIPA's venture into the world of cable television. CableLINE (the LINE stands for Labor Institute Network Experiment) was tested last winter for 10 weeks in Atlanta, Pittsburgh and Seattle. In addition to *America Works*, CableLINE's programming mix included a weekly newsmagazine show, *Laborvision*, an hour-long documentary series, *Images of Labor*, and weekend showings of feature-length films. It is no surprise that viewers who tuned into CableLINE saw a lot of independent work ranging from the inevitable *Harlan County, U.S.A.* to *The Weavers: Wasn't That a Time!* "We didn't set out to specifically acquire independent films," explains DeMartino. "But 90 to 95 percent of what we wanted was made by independents."

The response of cable operators and audiences was encouraging enough for LIPA, with a 1984-85 budget of \$6 million, to make the leap into a national satellite-delivered service. However, the producer of *Images of Labor*, Lyn Goldfarb, foresees a possible stumbling block to a continuing indie presence in the ambitious CableLINE project: independent producers' reliance on cheaper, non-union crews. In selecting work for *Images*, Goldfarb says, "There were some films I felt I just couldn't use because they were shot without union contracts." While acknowledging that most independent budgets do not allow for union salaries, she insists, "You can go to NABET and negotiate. They're flexible."

If LIPA is going to press the union issue, it would probably be more productive to focus on the cable industry itself rather than on independent producers. LIPA staffers admit there is a contradiction in working within a non-unionized industry, but they do not like to dwell on it; preferring to tout CableLINE's virtues as a business. At a luncheon of the New York chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences last February, Kirkman spoke to the assembled in the *lingua franca* of the media industry: numbers. One thing LIPA's figures tell us is that one out of five cable subscribers live in union-affiliated homes. Nationally, the AFL-CIO can lay claim to 14 million member households, many in about-to-be-wired urban areas. That's a number even Nielsen can respect: to the cable industry, a worker is just a consumer by another name.

The details of CableLINE's national launch will be announced later this month at the annual meeting of the National Cable Television Association. Following the model of Black Entertainment Television, LIPA expects to begin with a few programming hours offered as part of an established ad-supported service, as well as leasing time on the Satellite Program Network. Although it may take a few years, a "labor channel" is not beyond the realm of possibility. In a public world increasingly defined by the dictum "I am on television, therefore I am," it may prove to be a political necessity.

—DG

## Endangered Documentary Feted at Global Village

Global Village's Documentary Festival celebrates its tenth year this month with a full menu of film, video and television works. Over the past decade the documentary has persisted under conditions which might render a weaker species extinct. The field has seen particularly hard times during the '80s, as the country's move to the Reagan right has taken its toll on the funding and ideological freedom of political documentaries. Internal pressures have been brought to bear as well: in video—long the standard-bearer for socially conscious productions—arts panels have been more interested in advancing the *form* than the *message*, and a new wave of dramatic productions have overshadowed documentaries. "So the festival is more than a celebration," said festival directors Julie Gustafson and John Reilly. "It's a wish and a prayer that those who wish to pursue this art and craft will continue to do so."

The festival's decennary is a milestone for the field as a whole. Global Village attracted 218 entries, out of which 36 were chosen. And they are strong stuff. The selections include a half-dozen works about right-wing regimes and/or US intervention in Central America and two critical assessments of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon—thus carrying on a long tradition which has taken documentarians from Manchuria and Spain to Algeria and Vietnam. There's also a good sampling of home-grown muckraking: reports on the homeless, the garment industry, chemical farming and racism. The festival also indicates that documentarians are continuing to innovate form in the *service* of message, in such works as Juan Downey's non-linear *Chicago Boys* and Jaime Davidovich's *Evita: A Video Scrapbook*. Global Village hopes to tour the festival later this year.

Perhaps we shouldn't be so surprised at this trove of material. After all, the documentary's historical calling has always been—and remains today—to rise up during times of crisis.

—Renee Tajima

## Campus Crusade Mounts A Distribution Miracle

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to obtain foreign distribution. Some of the hardest areas to crack are Third World countries—regions where many indies have filmed but rarely succeeded in having their films shown. But one American group has done a miraculous job overcoming distribution obstacles around the world. Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) has helped 140 million people see Jesus.

CCC's film—simply entitled *Jesus*—tells the story of the life (and afterlife) of Jesus Christ from conception to crucifixion through resurrection and ascension. Based strictly on the Book of Luke, it was filmed in the Holy Land with native actors. No screen credits are given—it's the message that counts.

*Jesus* has been dubbed into 81 languages, at a cost of \$20,000 per translation, and has been shown in 85 countries (average audience: 50,000). According to Jeffrey Nickel, Campus Crusade's international field representative, the goal is to have the film dubbed into 271 languages, which will make it possible for 95% of the world population to hear the Word—be it in Swahili, Kampuchean or Amoy.

The two-hour film is often shown together with health clips to entire towns turning out to see their first movie. In India, Hindu leaders turned off street lights for several hours so the film could be shown to 40,000 while in Burma a crowd of 50,000 packed into an arena to see the film.

All versions of the film (with the curious exception of English) end with an invitation to receive Christ. Apparently, a lot of viewers RSVP, "Yes, delighted." After one showing to a South African audience of 300,000 there were 24,000 requests for more information on how to follow Christ.

Campus Crusade is not only proclaiming and sharing the glory of the Savior—it's making money too. The film is sold under a "life of print" lease for \$1,200. There are 1,600 16mm, 47 35mm and 87 8mm prints currently in circulation overseas and almost 200 in the United States, all in 16mm.

Various missionary organizations pay for prints themselves, and generally provide their own projection facilities—often just a sheet tacked onto a wall and a projector borrowed from a school 100 miles away. However, Campus Crusade already has 100-200 film teams on every continent to assist the missionaries and it hopes to establish 2,000 more within the next three to five years. It will do this with funds from private contributors, mostly North American. Contributions range from as little as five dollars to several million given by wealthy, devout individuals.

CCC emphasizes the power of prayer and Bible study. "For only God, not humans, can change the world," claims Janice Nickel, the *Jesus* communications coordinator. "We try to teach acceptance of the world God has made, and that the only battle worth fighting is the spiritual battle." (Evidently, some people living in areas where other battles are raging are amenable to this message—in 1981,

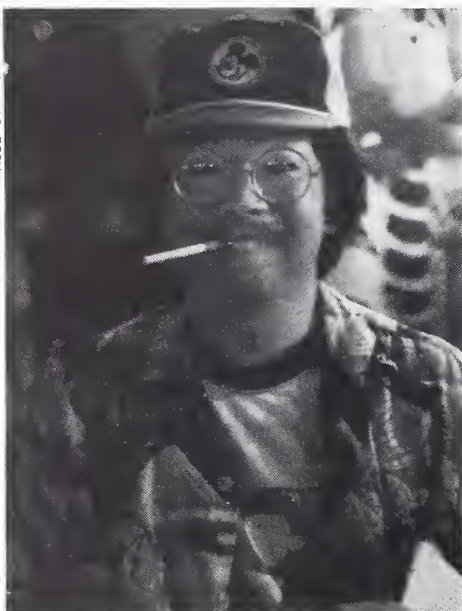


CCC claims, it converted 40,000 Guatemalans.)

Can other independents hope to share Campus Crusade's success? It will take something more tangible than a miracle—namely, money. For now, the only road to successful Third World distribution seems paved with substantial donations, although a few friends in government can help, too. And then there's the power of prayer... —Deborah Erickson

## Tribute to Tatsukawa: LA Activist Remembered

February 27, 1984. Steve Tatsukawa died at the age of 35 of a sudden illness in Los Angeles. In his life Steve worked tirelessly to uplift the Asian/Pacific communities and people of color and to promote racial justice. He was a key mover and shaker in Visual Communications (serving as its executive



Steven J. Tatsukawa on the set of *Hito-Hata: Raise the Banner*.

director and executive producer of *Hito Hata: Raise the Banner*), the Southern California Media Society (SCAMS), the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), the UCLA Ethno-Communications Program, the *Gidra* newspaper, *Eastwind* magazine, and gave countless hours to community struggles around multicultural studies, workers rights, the fight to save Little Tokyo, and much more.

Steve was loved and respected for his warmth and imaginative quick wit which could make even riding the subway a comic event. He was spontaneous combustion. No one will ever forget his performances with the Visual Communications punk rock band Lack-a-Tones (gargling his favorite standard "Mr. Blue") or his devastating performances on the Visual Communications softball team. And Steve formed special creative bonds with his fellow filmmakers—as a brilliant Groucho to Duane Kubo's Zeppo, and as a look-a-like John Lennon to Chris Choy's Yoko Ono—introducing a generation of us to the 10-pin action at the Hollywood Bowl in Crenshaw.

This rare humor infused Steve's writing—and in that talent we can see the full measure of his selfless commitment. Steve could have been one rich screenwriter (selling scripts on the beach, as he liked to say). Few people know that Steve had already broken through Hollywood's race barriers on his own—selling his work to the popular television show *Alice* and winning a prestigious screenwriting competition sponsored by Hollywood's major studios. But he chose instead to devote his life and talents to alternative media and his community. His ad copy abilities (he was once a junior exec with BBD&O) went to "Save Little Tokyo" slogans, funding proposals and advocacy pieces. More recently, as the director of program development for KCET-LA (and thus probably one of the highest-ranking Asian American public television executives in the country), Steve was "our man on Sunset Boulevard," maneuvering within the system for Third World and independent producers.

Steve was to be married this June to the talented graphic artist Qris Yamashita. We would have seen him in April at the NAATA board meeting—a break from spring training before the Asian/Pacific softball tournaments. And he had great plans for the organizations he nurtured and inspired. Yet Steve was not the type to dominate in his leadership, and these organizations will keep moving forward in the able hands of those worked beside him all these years. We will miss Steve dearly, but we all promise to continue his work well, in the spirit with which he lived his life.

The Steve Tatsukawa Memorial Fund is being established to celebrate and continue Steve's diverse interest in media, Asian Pacific studies and a more humane society. Those interested in making a contribution should write a check to The Steve Tatsukawa Memorial Fund, c/o Visual Communications, 244 So. San Pedro #309, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

—RT ■

MAY 1984



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## SUPER-8

# Bridging Language Gap With Low-Tech Ingenuity

TONI TREADWAY & BOB BRODSKY

More and more independent films are finding their way into international exhibition (if not distribution), and still more would find receptive audiences abroad if the language barriers could be more easily overcome. Leaping the language barriers has traditionally been accomplished by filmmakers in one of four ways: by making films without language that needs translation; by making subtitled prints; by replacing native language tracks with appropriate foreign language tracks or by laying another language right on top of the native track; or by limiting international exhibition to native-language audiences. We'll skip any discussion of the last route because that's what international exhibition usually seeks to overcome.

The art of making films that do not need language translation has been much overlooked during the past 50 years. In a recent interview nonagenarian actress Lillian Gish said, "There never was such a thing as silent film." Early directors did not have the audio recording technology to enable them to use location sounds, so theater owners hired musicians. "When films learned to talk," said Gish, "we lost 95% of our audience because only 5% of the world speaks English."

Having always worked in a talkative documentary mode, we decided to try making a film with an international soundtrack. The opportunity and the incentive came last winter when we were in France. After being moved by the ravages of the D-Day invasion still coming up through the sands of Normandy, we

made a short film about D-Day—its significance then and now. (Lately, European peace advocates have used WWII anniversaries as occasions to speak out on armament issues.) Although we originally wrote a narrative poem to accompany the images, in the end we settled on a version intelligible to speakers of any language. Without a word on the soundtrack, the film resonates with the ambience of past and present: the bells and children's choir of Rouen Cathedral, pedestrians' and soldiers' voices, sea-sounds from the Channel, and all the cachophony of the 1944 war. We feel the film is stronger without words, and are receiving a surprising number of requests for screenings abroad.

Independent filmmakers with language-sensitive films also have some economical subtitling options open to them. We saw a truly elegant presentation at the Montreal Super-8 Festival, a portrait of Brazilian filmmaker Carlos Porto de Andrade, Jr., by Jean Hamel and Sylvain Bernier. The film was in Portuguese; directly below the film frame on the screen appeared the clearest subtitles we have ever seen. The whole presentation was carried off with utmost simplicity.

Here's how they did it. Once the filmmakers had translated Porto de Andrade's commentary, they typed up the appropriate phrases as they might appear in subtitle form on ordinary white typewriter paper. Then, using strong light, they photographed these subtitles with a 35mm single lens reflex camera, loaded with Kodak Technical Pan film #2415. They rated

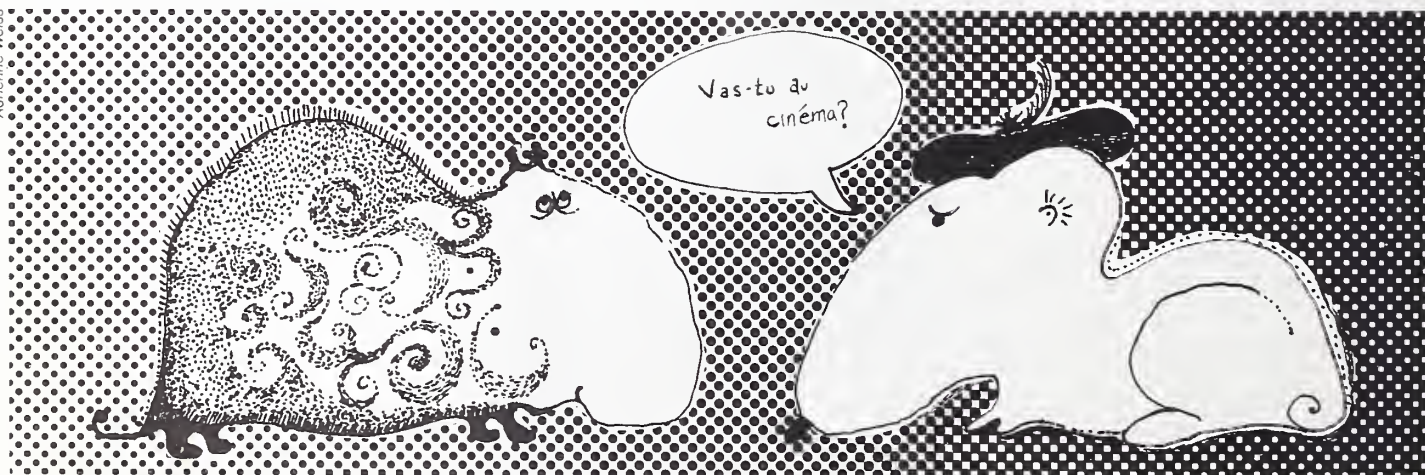
the film at E.I. 100 in order to get extreme contrast between the letters and the white paper. The film was then developed in Kodak D-19 for maximum density in the black (the white paper). A little testing and they were home free. The black-and-white negatives, mounted and projected as slides from a manually operated slide projector, showed no outline of the frame. The lettering would simply appear and disappear. Because it was below the image, the subtitling did not call attention to any part of the picture, as sometimes happens with overlaid subtitles. In an audience of 200, only two people said the subtitles were too far away from the head of the speaker. The rest of us were delighted with the result.

## AUTOMATIC SLIDE ADVANCE?

This system of subtitling is undoubtedly the least expensive route to go across language barriers with a film, but it requires someone who knows both languages and has had time to review the film and practice changing the slides before a public screening. This may not be as difficult as it seems. Bernier is now working on a system of encoding a pulse on the balance stripe of S-8 film to automatically trigger the slide (subtitle) advance. This may be more difficult than it seems.

First of all, some sort of pulse/encoding equipment must be selected. There are lots of these units available around audio-visual suppliers, but they vary widely in their ability to decode one another's pulses. In addition to the expense of the pulse unit, you might have to ship it around with the film and the slides.

Secondly, there is the decades-old problem of isolating inexpensive slide-triggering devices from spurious powerline pulses. Ektagraphic slide projectors are well shielded from these pulses, but Kodak Carousel projectors (the black consumer versions of the Ektagraphics) are not. The chances of getting an unsuitable projector at the exhibition end and of having all the subtitles zip by unintentionally are far more likely with an automatic pulse system than in a once-rehearsed manual system.



*Are you going to the movies?*



We prefer subtitling to dubbing a translation over the audio tracks, except when it is done on a discrete soundtrack (as it can be on the magnetic balance stripe of S-8 soundfilm). Then, and only then, can the dub track be equalized and leveled separately from the main audio according to the needs of each exhibition space so the audience can tune either soundtrack in or out. Successful dubbing and exhibition of a dubbed film requires at least as much effort as Bernier/Hamel subtitles, and lots more money.

#### LIVE NARRATOR

Preferable to dubbing, at least for many independent films, is the practice of placing a person in the audience who can, with accuracy and spirit, give a live translation. The person must have seen the film several times and be quite familiar with its content and style. Several years ago we had the pleasure of being present at a unique screening of Jean Rouch's *Cocorico, Monsieur Poulet (Cockadoodledoo, Mr. Chicken)*. The film is in French and other languages; the audience was English-speaking. Rouch himself was present, and, equipped with an RE-50 microphone, proceeded to narrate the outrageous cross-cultural goings-on with the fullness of the

Rouch personality. We sat in the middle of a large theatre with a Shure M67 mixer, controlling the volume of the film soundtrack; when Rouch would begin to expound, we'd drop the soundtrack slightly. We had no rehearsal. Rouch's mike volume was constant, but when he wanted to say something to a companion and not broadcast about the hall, he would just leave the hand-held RE-50 (a handling noise-resistant mike) in his lap. It was as close to live theater as ethnographic film may ever become. Afterwards the French-speaking minority at the screening said they had had the best of several worlds.

The most important consideration in hurdling the language barrier is to enable the film to land intact on the other side. It never does completely, not only because of the visual or aural competition created by either subtitling or dubbing, but because all translations from one culture to another are imperfect. But if you can transport even some facts, some emotions, some appreciations over cultural barriers, it is worth the effort. ■

*Bob Brodsky and Toni Treadway are the authors of Super 8 in the Video Age, which was just translated into Spanish. Treadway serves on the board of the Boston Film/Video Foundation.*

## LEGAL TALK

# Financial Set-Ups: The Not-for-Profit

PAULA R. SCHAAP

*Have film property, will travel.* A fictitious *Variety* ad, but an accurate description of an independent filmmaker ready to produce his or her first feature-length film. (We've dubbed our fledgling producer "Wheeler Dealer" after his or her self-proclaimed image.) Wheeler has the rights to an unknown yet brilliant novel, or a new talented screenwriter under contract, or an idea for a timely, provocative documentary. Now Wheeler's real task begins: raising money.

Like many people, Wheeler views financing a film as something of an afterthought to the creative process. So Wheeler signs over his trust fund and inveigles a few thousand out of Old Aunt Peg, only to discover that the sums necessary for even a low-budget production make it impossible to move forward without careful advance planning. Wheeler's choice of financing options will not only govern the amount of money available to him, it will also affect the very nature of his film.

Wheeler's first consideration should be whether he wants his film to be "not-for-profit" or "for profit." This decision will de-

pend to a great extent on what kind of film he intends to make, for different films appeal to different funding sources. In this Part I of a two-part article, we'll look at the not-for-profit situation.

Take the case of *Mississippi Triangle*. The film documents the struggle of a century-old Chinese community in northern Mississippi to maintain its ethnic cohesion in a modern, integrated society. Allan Siegel, one of its directors, noted that documentaries generally do not make money and are therefore less appealing to private investors. The best route for his film was through grants because "the theme of *Mississippi Triangle* was close to the National Endowment for the Humanities objectives, so they became the most likely funding source for the project."

"Not-for-profit" does not mean that Wheeler's movie cannot make a profit. It does mean that the participants in the film will not be able to share in its profits (which must be reinvested instead of used for personal aggrandizement). Ditto for the people who contribute money to the film. It is perfectly

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David Keller



"Once we've found the right financial set-up, we can also provide some rather unique fundraising ideas."

legitimate, however, for the members of the production company, the director, cast, and so forth, to take reasonable salaries from the profits. And the people who contribute cash and materials to the film may take a charitable tax deduction, if—and only if—the not-for-profit corporation which produced the film has been declared tax-exempt by the IRS.

Once Wheeler has decided that his film is best funded through tax-deductible contributions and grants, he should take certain legal steps. First, he should set up a not-for-profit corporation. The incorporation process is relatively simple, inexpensive (in New York, expect to spend \$100-150, not including lawyers' fees), and can usually be completed within a few months. Wheeler's not-for-profit corporation must be registered in the state where it will be doing business. Each state has its own requirements and a lawyer should be consulted. If Wheeler cannot afford a lawyer, Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (VLA), which has chapters around the country, can provide legal assistance free or at a reduced fee. VLA will handle incorporation only for not-for-profit groups.

It is possible to operate as a not-for-profit organization without being a corporation, but it is usually advisable to incorporate. Corporate status protects those who act on behalf of the corporation from certain kinds of liability. Additionally, it is more likely that foundations and other grant-giving agencies will take a project seriously if it has incorporated.

Wheeler does not have to wait for the state to confirm his corporate status before he begins doing business. In New York, he can operate as "Wheeler Productions, doing business as a corporation" in the interim. Similar provisions exist in other states.

The second step is applying to the IRS for

tax-exempt status. Some of the advantages to tax-exemption are (1) it expands the field of grants that Wheeler can apply for (some foundations will only award grants to organizations that are tax-exempt, while others require only not-for-profit status); (2) the income produced by the film is generally not taxable; and (3) a private contributor can take a charitable tax deduction for the amounts donated to the project. The Internal Revenue Code specifies that tax-exempt status will be granted only to certain kinds of corporations. Among others, these include corporations operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes.

Are there any circumstances under which Wheeler should not apply for a tax exemption? Yes: if he does not have time to wait for an IRS ruling, which can take up to a year. But if Wheeler does not request tax-exempt status—or if the IRS denies it to him—his investors will not be able to take a tax deduction and his film income will be taxed.

The June 12th Film Group, which produced *In Our Hands*, a documentary about the 1982 peace rally in Central Park, did not seek tax-exempt status. The need to shoot and produce the film within a short time frame militated against waiting for an IRS ruling.

What the June 12th Film Group did, according to producer Robert Richter, was to operate under an umbrella organization, the Film Fund. The Film Fund has tax-exempt status, and therefore can funnel grants and tax-deductible donations to projects which it has agreed to sponsor.

#### DEALING WITH YOUR UMBRELLA

Umbrella organizations such as the Film Fund perform another important function for their projects. For a fee, which is deducted from the film's grant, the umbrella will act as a

fiscal agent, overseeing the film's fiscal and accounting operations.

Wheeler must realize that he may lose some control over his project if he works through a sponsor, because the sponsor is ultimately responsible for the content of its projects. It is wise to have a written agreement with the umbrella organization so that there is no misunderstanding as to who owns rights to the film, or what kind of film it will be.

Wheeler must also expect to lose some control if he goes directly to private foundations or government funding sources. A project must be tailored to the granting agency's guidelines if it is to stand a chance of consideration.

Another well-known drawback to seeking funds through the not-for-profit route is that foundations and government agencies are highly susceptible to politics. Allan Siegel noted that because NEH places a high priority on the subject matter of the projects it funds, it has been affected by changes in the political climate. The National Endowment for the Arts, on the other hand, uses artists' peer review panels to evaluate applications. Siegel therefore feels that the NEA is somewhat more resistant to political concerns.

Recently, it was announced that the staff of the New York State Council for the Arts was being cut, so that projects would receive a more cursory review than had been the practice in the past. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, one of the prime funding sources for independent filmmakers, is now decentralized. Although CPB decentralization allows each station to concentrate more heavily on local projects, many filmmakers feel that there has also been increased competition for reduced funds.

Once Wheeler has his not-for-profit corporation in place, he must conduct its affairs in accordance with applicable statutes. If not, the individuals involved in corporate business may lose their protection from liability. Likewise, if Wheeler has been granted tax-exempt status by the IRS, he must be careful to operate within the IRS guidelines or risk losing his tax exemption.

The great day finally comes when the money starts to flow in from foundations and high-minded people. Now Wheeler, secure in tax-exempt, not-for-profit status, can begin production of his film, dreaming of the day when he and Robert Flaherty are mentioned in the same breath. Next month's *Independent* will follow Wheeler through a different kind of financing: the for-profit feature film.

*Paula R. Schaap is a writer and entertainment lawyer.*

*Author's note: This article is presented only for the purposes of educating the independent filmmaker in some basic legal principles. It is not to be taken as legal advice. Every financing situation is different, the law constantly changes, and the laws in each state can vary widely. The independent filmmaker should, therefore, always consult his or her attorney before undertaking any course that may have legal ramifications.*



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### **VIDEO FOR FILM**



# Sweet Stereo Sounds in the Field

*High-fidelity, low-budget approach to rethinking sound design for later mixing to two channels.*

JOHN BISHOP

High fidelity sound is catching up with the moving image. Videodiscs, BETA-HIFI and the new VHS-HIFI videotapes can put "Dolby stereo" quality on home video systems, and the FCC will soon approve hifi standards for general television broadcast. Film and videomakers have always lavished more care on their soundtracks than videotape or optical tracks could reproduce, so these are welcome developments. Working in stereo, however, requires some rethinking of sound design, particularly for low-budget documentaries.

When I began working on *New England Fiddles*, a music film that features some of the finest traditional musicians in the Northeast, I decided to make a high-fidelity stereo soundtrack.

Other than a few big-budget rock-and-roll movies which were blown up to 35mm, stereo sound is new territory for 16mm and I could find few models for how to do it. I consulted Stuart Cody, a great innovator in documentary sound, who owns a mixing studio in Boston (490 Green St., Cambridge MA 02139). He was very enthusiastic about trying a stereo mix, and advised me on how to record stereo sound in the field.

The mechanics of making a stereo film are similar to working in mono. Sound was recorded on a stereo Nagra at 15 ips. The tapes were resolved to 16mm fullcoat with the right channel on the edge track and left channel on a center track. And the edited tracks were mixed against the picture onto edge/center fullcoat. The differences are how you handle two microphones and channels in the initial recording, and how you mix to two channels instead of one.

But what does stereo mean?

Theoretically, you can mix a stereo soundtrack for a film from elements recorded in mono by placing each voice and effect on the appropriate side of the screen. For many documentaries, it may be most practical to shoot in mono but then use stereo music and enhancements in post-production. For example, a gunshot can sound on-screen from the right and ricochet on the left. A railroad train recorded in mono can be faded up on the left, panned to both channels, and faded out on the right as the train disappears from the screen.

Stereo on records (which is most people's

experience with stereo) is synthesized from mono sources, each instrument on a discrete track. During the mix each voice is placed in space by panning it proportionally to the right and left channels. This system works only if the sound sources are isolated from each other. If they are not, phase differences between what each microphone picks up begin cancelling out parts of the music when they are blended.

## WHAT A LOVELY COUPLE!

Adapting this system of recording stereo film sound has several disadvantages. On location, it is difficult to isolate microphones. A fiddler and guitarist playing in a living room, for example, cannot be separated adequately no matter how close and directional the mikes. When using more than two mikes and a two-channel recorder, the soundperson has to do a live mix without seeing the picture. And this style of recording does not capture the sound coloration and spatiality of the particular room.

The alternative is to use a microphone arrangement that reproduces the soundspace in a way that is resonant with what the camera sees. This is the essence of documentary sound. Cody recommended a "coincident stereo pair"—in my case, two Sennheiser ME-40 directional microphones crossed at right angles on their diaphragms. The left side of the right mike pick-up and the right side of the left mike pick-up are redundant, thereby placing the principal sound in the center. The right of the right and left of the left will be sensitive to different room reflections and off-axis sound sources, which gives stereo presence (see diagram). Cody explained that if I separated the microphones, phase cancellations would cause unpredictable holes in the reproduced soundspace. The coincident pair comes very close to the way we actually hear: after all, our ears are separated by only a few inches.

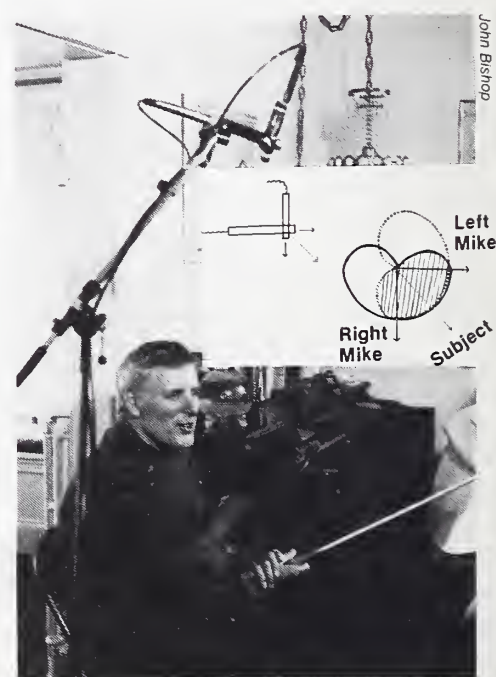
In mono the picture and sound emanate from the same point. The sound stays with the picture, and the recorder follows the camera. Stereo sound has a spatial dimension that removes it from the screen. The sound hangs in front of the picture. Unconsciously the au-

dience senses the dimensions around the image. When the camera pans, the sound does not always have to pan with it. Using a coincident pair, the soundperson has a choice of tracking and moving with the camera or maintaining fixed sound coordinates. In the latter case, the sound coordinates can be realigned in the mix to follow the picture geometry.

With a coincident pair, the sound blend is entirely dependent on mike placement. The only way to get the best sound is to move the mike around and try lots of angles. Sometimes a change of only a few feet makes all the difference. For music, my recordists Robbie Leppzer and Lynn Cadwallader usually set the mikes up on a stand after experimenting to find the optimal placement.

For *New England Fiddles* it was most important to record the music in stereo. However, since the musicians tended to alternate between talking and playing, and it would have been awkward to change recording setups for speech, much of the spoken word was also recorded in stereo. We carried a mono Nagra with a Sennheiser 415 mike as a backup, and when it seemed that there would be a lot of dialogue, Robbie or Lynn would switch from 15 ips stereo to 7½ ips mono.

There is little difference between editing a stereo film and a mono film. The fine points of stereo imaging are not an issue in making a rough cut and refining the program content. The editing table I used had only edge track heads, so I could only hear the right channel anyway. Later I rented a switchable stereo head that could combine the two channels or play either one separately. That enabled me to check exactly what was on each track.



Paddy Cronin in *New England Fiddles*; note coincident stereo mikes. Chart shows response pattern of two cardioid mikes crossed at 90° on their diaphragms, a coincident stereo pair.



## SOUND IN SPACE

When the picture was locked up, I broke down the two edited tracks into two music tracks (stereo) and two voice tracks (mixed stereo and mono). I also built two effects tracks consisting mostly of mono sound effects and ambience. As part of this process, I wrote out the cue sheets for the sound mix. This is essentially the same procedure as preparing for a mono mix, except that the cue sheets must have notes delineating the spatial placement of each sound. For example, some cows come in from screen left, so the mooing and scuffling of the cows (mono) had to be panned in from the left.

To increase the sense of space in some sections, I put different (but similar) background ambience on each of the effects tracks. In a nightclub scene, the sound of people talking and glasses clinking on the right speaker is different from that on the left; likewise the applause is different on the right and left channels. This juxtaposing of mono elements can sometimes be more effective than using stereo background sounds.

The limiting factor in doing a stereo mix is the number of dubbers equipped with stereo heads and amplifiers. Stuart Cody had only two, and I had four strands of stereo material, so we mixed the film in two passes.

On the first pass we mixed the voice tracks and some effects onto tracks A&B of a 35mm four-track master roll. This included placing voices and effects relative to screen position and panning as the screen geometry changed. Then the film was rewound and the music tracks put on the stereo dubbers. We went through the film again, mixing the music and a few more effects onto the two open master tracks (C&D).

## A SMOOTH BLEND

I wanted subtle stereo effects rather than ping-pong stereo. The purpose of going stereo was to get a fuller presence and spatiality, not dramatic separation. With each bit of sound I considered the following:

- 1) Which channels to use. Sometimes the stereo is optimal as recorded; in other cases it sounds better to reverse the channels (right to left). Another section might sound best if the right and left are blended so that part of the right goes to the left and vice versa. And in other cases, you get the best sound by using only one channel panned to both tracks and dropping the other.
- 2) The normal mixing variables such as relative level, enhancements, equalization, compression/expansion and so on.
- 3) The position of the sound in space, including panning the sound as the scene changes.

If two people are talking, the one on the right side of the screen should be heard from the right speaker. You become accustomed to hearing that person from the right. When you move to a close-up, however, the sound coord-

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3. The Association works, though the combined efforts of its membership, to provide practical, informational and moral support for independent video and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival of, and providing for, the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.
4. The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.
5. The Association champions independent video and film as valuable and vital expressions of our culture and is determined, by mutual action, to open pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

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3. To promote constructive dialogue and heightened awareness among the membership of the social, artistic and personal choices involved in the pursuit of both independent and sponsored work, via such mechanisms as screenings and forums.
4. To continue to work to strengthen AIVF's services to independents, in order to help reduce the membership's dependence on the kinds of sponsorship which encourage the compromise of personal values.

dinates should also move so that the voice comes from the center. For transitions, you can bring in a piece of music or a voiceover from one side of the screen, arriving on center as the picture cuts into sync.

The 35mm master roll provides a mono track when all four channels are blended and a stereo track when A&C go to the left and B&D go to the right. It is third generation sound (original tape to fullcoat to edited master) and is used to make the optical film track and for transfer to a video master. I also made a mono and a stereo 16mm fullcoat track to use in interlock screenings.

The premiere screening of *New England Fiddles* was the kind of experience that makes being a filmmaker worthwhile. Stuart Cody and John Terry spent four hours installing a 900-watt arc light theater projector, interlock stereo dubber, power amplifiers and speakers in a 500-seat lecture hall. The image (a print from the A&B rolls) was huge, bright and rock steady and every nuance of the soundtrack was heard. 16mm films should always look and sound so good.

### FUTURE FORMATS

But what do I do with my stereo film now?

*New England Fiddles* was conceived as a project for videodisc. In addition to the half-hour film, there is a second half-hour of performances. It is the kind of material that can be watched straight through or examined in detail, and videodisc has the required picture/sound fidelity and viewing flexibility for both. But waiting for videodisc to become economically viable is like waiting for Godot.

Instead, *Fiddles* will be released in the new BETA and VHS HIFI cassettes which encode audio in the video tracks. When the 16mm CRI printing master is transferred to 1" video, the 35mm master soundtrack will be interlocked, and the stereo put on the two tracks of the 1" videotape. There is some loss of sound quality on 1" and as a protection, a time-coded four-track audiotape will be made during the transfer as well. Theoretically this audiotape can be used as the sound source for videodisc mastering and HIFI tape dubbing. In current

practice, however, BETA-HIFI sound is dubbed directly from 1" video masters (even for Michael Jackson's *Thriller*).

The stereo tracks (in lower fidelity) can also be heard on VHS and ¾" cassettes which have dual soundtracks. For broadcast and cable, stereo can only be heard if the track is simulcast on FM. This can be done using the stereo tracks on the 1" tape. In the near future American television will be routinely transmitted in stereo (stereo-ready television sets are currently being marketed).

Showing film prints of *New England Fiddles* with the stereo track will always require either interlock facilities as described above or a Sonorex double band projector with an edge/center head and stereo amplifier. 16mm release prints have a normal optical track which meets the needs of most audiences and matches the equipment of all screening facilities. The film has already been booked by several theaters in New England. Because of the care that went into the stereo track, the optical track sounds great too (only those of us who have been close to the production know it could sound even better). It's a nice musical experience either way.

So was it worth the trouble? Would I do it again? I'd say yes on both counts. Whether it's videodisc, videotape or broadcast, hifi sound will be expected of tomorrow's media. Working in stereo didn't cost any more and my film can be dropped onto videodisc tomorrow or mastered to a high-definition stereo video format in the future. Now I wouldn't consider shooting music without recording stereo sound, and would probably mix a stereo track even for documentaries where the original sound is mono.

I am interested in hearing from other people working on stereo in films and videos. Please contact me at Media Generation, 917 East Broadway, Haverhill, MA 01830, (617) 372-0458.

*John Bishop is an independent producer who has worked in both film and video. His other productions include Choose Life, The Land Where the Blues Began, Yoyo Man and Rhesus Play.*

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# Choreographers Who Make Film Move

Pooh Kaye, Johanna Boyce & Sally Silvers,  
three young post-modern choreographers, explore  
film as an expressive extension of movement possibilities.

DARYL CHIN

Three of the most inventive young choreographers at work today—Pooh Kaye, Johanna Boyce and Sally Silvers—are exploring cinematic values in a choreographic context. Although many choreographers work with film, Kaye's, Boyce's and Silvers' interest in movement derives from sources other than traditional dance technique. Starting from the precepts of "ordinary movement" (say, sitting or walking) and "task performance" (scrubbing, digging), the three have evolved highly individualized expressive techniques. Summing up the current interest in the conjunction of film and choreography, Johanna Boyce said: "Contemporary experimental choreographers are looking for ways to express the same old things in a new voice or with new perspectives. Film is a relatively new extension of movement possibilities, so it's not surprising that so many people are interested in it."

Kaye's films in both Super-8 and 16mm are whimsical, deeply humorous studies of fantastic activities, often played out with objects. Boyce's films animate objects like a puppeteer and manipulate pre-existing "found movements." Gravitating to live performance, Silvers has danced in and around film, exploring the parameters of actual and recorded motion in collaborations with filmmakers Henry Hills, Abigail Child and Mr. "E." In the following interviews, the three choreographers discuss their work with film.

## POOH KAYE ENVIRONMENTAL HUMOR

Pooh Kaye has been making films since 1975. Last year, in collaboration with Elisabeth Ross, she completed her first 16mm film. Previously Kaye created a series of distinctive and eccentric S-8 films, all of which were "solo" in the most complete sense, featuring Kaye as lone performer, cameraperson and editor. In these films, which she calls *The Wild Girl* series, Kaye utilizes different film speeds to mythologize wholly fanciful flights of movement, such as attempting to climb up a pillar or swimming while lying over the arms of a wooden chair. The entirely self-contained production of these films lends them an almost autistic integrity. Her collaborative film, *Sticks on the Move* (1983), shows Kaye expanding her cinematic concerns to include a



Pooh Kaye & Elisabeth Ross' *Sticks on the Move*:  
"Everything the camera does is impossible in real life."

wide cast of performers in a broad range of activities which always center movement in relation to objects. Kaye is currently working on her second 16mm film, *Bringing Home the Bacon*.

"In 1975 my closest friend, Marcia Resnick, told me I should buy a camera and record all the endless activities I did to entertain myself in my loft. I took her advice, and started making films.

"I would spend hours figuring out angles, and what was inside the image of the camera.

Since I was recording myself, I didn't use a cameraperson. I would improvise within given structures. These were the *Wild Girl* films. *Going Outside* [1982] was a transitional film; I was becoming more involved with film in a traditional sense, and I was very conscious of making scenes in that one.

"There's been a very linear progression: learning what happens to image and action within the confines of the rectangle of the camera. In the last four years [I've begun to learn] editing; before that I would just shoot, and that was the film. Then I started thinking about editing before shooting something.

"Changing to 16mm wasn't a big deal. Suddenly you have to use a light meter, it costs a lot more, and there's a lot more opportunity to do post-production, but you're still responsible for a rectangle. The big thing was that I was now dealing with other performers. There was a large cast, a collaborator and a composer—that was heady. The film was shot in scenes, so I just had to connect them together: there wasn't much editing. But there was one scene which we shot incorrectly. We were supposed to have shot it pixilated, but we shot it in regular time. It looked different from the rest of the film, but it was still a wonderful scene—two people eating a piece of wood—so we decided to pixilate.

"Initially, the speeded-up scenes started off as a mistake because I didn't know all the uses of my camera. But I liked the results very much, so I kept playing with it. At the same time, I was also very interested in [Eadweard] Muybridge's work] which has a pixilated quality: individual photographs that make a bumpy kind of continuous motion when hooked up. When you pixilate, the effect is like taking still photographs and hooking them up to each other because you drop out so much information.

"The camera can do things plastically that are not possible in performance. Everything it does, in fact, is not possible in real life. It puts a frame on everything. Although my films tend to be slightly more narrative than my performances, both are based on the human body interacting with its environment. I'm basically interested in the animated world, the living body and the objects that surround it. I'm particularly interested in it on a slightly bizarre level, or in things that make me marvel, as opposed to statements of reality.



"My S-8 films were much more fantastical and isolated. It was a huge pleasure making them. It was like walking into a fantasy that has both a mechanical and visceral reality because it's in the real world. Here you are loose in this box [the camera frame]—it's exciting!"

"Obviously, S-8 doesn't go very far. I have no intention of using it again, now that the 16mm camera is no longer frightening. For me, the real pleasure is in making films; it's secondary where they go, how they succeed. But, of course, it's better if they have some communicative powers and if people can see them. Then, you're making something that's in some way a gift to the world."

#### JOHANNA BOYCE: FOUND MOVEMENT

Johanna Boyce has made four films in collaboration with filmmaker John Schabel: *Waiting* (S-8, 1980), *A Weekend Spent Filming It* (S-8, 1980), *Waterbodies* (16mm, two-screen, 1982) and *Bombshells* (S-8, 1983). All four center on movement, although in widely varying contexts. *A Weekend Spent Filming It* derives from activities performed by the group with which Boyce has worked in her dances, while *Bombshells* is a collage film juxtaposing movement from a wide cross-section of TV images. The most elaborate film is *Waterbodies*, an evocative and mysterious dual-screen vision of underwater movements, choreographed by Boyce. Made up of shots taken from above and below the "swimmers," the film echoes the actual water-logged movements of the performers. This film was part of a multimedia work presented in performance in the swimming pool of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, during Boyce's residency there with the American Dance Festival. Boyce is now shooting her first S-8 film without a collaborator.

"My interest in dance started in college, and initially I didn't think of using film. Then when I came to New York I first used film to record my dances. Then it just happened naturally—once I saw the dances on film I thought, 'Well, why not start with film?'"

"*Waterbodies* was a way of seeing for us, because you can't look underwater most of the time. The camera really opened up more possibilities for doing things underwater. One problem with the piece was that you'd only see people from their waists up, as they appeared out of the water. You couldn't often see through the water because they would either be making waves or the lighting just wasn't enough to look under water. We decided that it would be really interesting to invert what was happening and present it above water. I had ideas about what it would look like, but I couldn't really know. There were two separate conceptions: one, 'Here's what's happening on top of the water—everybody's doing a dolphin move and this is what it will look like from up above'; and two, 'Now let's try filming it from underneath and see what that looks like.' Then we wanted them to be interconnected, so there was never anything happening



Johanna Boyce & John Schabel's *Waterbodies*: "It was a way of seeing for us."

underwater that you didn't see above water. It was like two different stories going on, or one story with two views of it.

"John Schabel spent a lot of time during our rehearsals with his underwater camera, saying, 'This looks great, let's try doing this.' Or, say, when we did a deadman's float, he'd comment, 'People blowing bubbles up around their faces look really neat from underwater, let's elongate that part!' Whatever was presented in the film would generally relate to what was happening in the water. A lot of people thought we actually had video cameras that were projecting what was happening onto a screen, because the live things and the film images were fairly well

connected. John had the idea of a double screen, and from that moment, he shot with the aim of these things merging in the center, or not merging, or overlapping.

"I like film's ability to capture 'found movements.' And, even though I was directing, my first films were almost like people playing charades, people creating things unselfconsciously, forgetting...Or they remembered that the camera was there but didn't specifically find movement for film, they discovered it for another purpose, like communicating a word.

"*Bombshells* is a very direct development of found movement. It's seeing movement and then organizing it. All my choreography has that characteristic. My current workprints are from parades, playgrounds and animal training schools. I can use film to speed up and slow down movement, or abstract it. But even beyond that, my interest is in film's ability to go outside the theater and the dance studio, and find movement that already has a specific function, and then create a new statement by juxtaposing it to other movements or other themes.

"With my new film, I'm using my camera as much as I can to photograph anything that strikes my fancy—within the limits of economics. Now I'm mostly working with scenarios that are framed with a set camera, so that things roll on and off, like puppeteering. For example, one scene will have movements like an orange moving across a table or worms moving across a postcard of waterskiers: movement tableaux that aren't [peopled with] dancers, but are outside-propelled actions, or some kind of human manipulation of small things for the camera. It's like Alwin Nikoia's creating movement motifs which obscure the human beings presenting it—it's another way creating motion and sequences without having a human fact or emotion present.

"Ultimately, film helps me to clarify my interests. That's my interest in 'found movement' and in manipulating situations that have their own motivation. Film is a perfect medium for educating me more about reorganizing and juxtaposing things that already exist."

#### SALLY SILVERS: DANCE & FILM LIVE

Sally Silvers began her choreographic career performing in many film-related venues such as *Anthology Film Archives* and the *Collective for Living Cinema* in New York. As a choreographer she has favored radical juxtapositions, breaking down and editing movement phrases. Her work in film has been collaborative: two films with Henry Hills (*Plagiarism* [retitled *Radio Adios*], 16mm, 1982, and a work-in-progress tentatively titled *Money*, 16mm); a film with Abigail Child (*Mutiny*, 16mm, 1983), of which an unedited version was shown in concert under the name *A Day in the Office*; and most significantly, a multimedia collaboration with Mr. "E," a New York-based avant-garde filmmaker



(*Celluloid Sally and Mr. "E"*) which combines 8 and 16mm films along with live performance, and was first presented in April, 1983. Silvers notes that filmmaking is a natural extension of her choreography which focuses on choppy movements that translate well into the discrete units and frames of film.

"I was sought out as a collaborator for the films that I have appeared in. But for the film project with Mr. "E," I approached him because he doesn't show his work in public contexts, other than open film screenings. I knew about his work through Henry [Hills] and Abby [Child]; I had seen and liked it.

"Film is more improvisational than dance. With Abigail, it was a question of going into an office and performing my piece (the very first I ever did) between desks, so I had three feet here and there. The problem was to perform it in that public context in that limited space! Henry was more interested in getting backgrounds behind everything. He wanted crowds, outdoors, conflict. For him, I would go out with a list or improvise on the spot as he shot.

"Mr. "E" animates things like comic books. I originally intended to learn the movements from one of his animated comic book series and then perform those movements while the film was projected. But we got distracted and never did that project, although we did do a film and dance performance.

"Working with Mr. "E" I became interested in the problem of presenting a film and dance performance simultaneously. There's a consensus that it just doesn't work. Film time has a different focus—it can cut up and manipulate time. Dance is real time without the option of editing. The competing events are the main problem in a live dance-with-film performance. But lighting is, too. How can it be dark for the film if it must be lit to perform? I didn't solve that problem with Mr. "E," although I have some ideas about how to fix it next time.

"I thought Mr. "E's" films would be perfect for solving the problem of competing images, because they are basically object studies. They were like inanimate animate objects or still lifes or statues—things that normally have a living presence behind what they had become. Mr. "E" shoots these inanimate objects like dancers: one shot, click, one shot, move, one shot, one shot, one shot, all the way around so the objects become a moving force field. We decided to use those things in the performance. We thought they would not present a conflict of visual imagery. The result was more like having dance partners than presenting dance in film.

"In one section of *Celluloid Sally* there were two projectors, and footage of statues. I would move all over the space, and the statue footage from two different projectors would overlap. Then I would do a statue-like movement. Or I would drop out and look at, say, his footage of torsos in a museum.

"In the 16mm part there's a botanical garden which took up lots of the backdrop. I



Sally Silvers performs aboard the Intrepid in Henry Hills' *Money*.

came out with a ladder and tried to be the same scale as the huge plants by becoming tall and trying to set myself at a great height. And then there was a four-projector section where Mr. "E" shot colors—producing shadows, like a straight movement-shadow bit with color."

The interdisciplinary approach to the arts became an integral part of American culture in the 1960s and early 1970s. "In 1963 Beverly Schmidt camouflaged herself as she appeared in a red gown against a lush green image of red flowers," wrote Jill Johnston in the *Village Voice* in 1968. "This was the first film-stage piece by a choreographer that I can recall. Everyone was excited about it at the time."

Many choreographers shared that excitement and continued exploring the media arts. However, during the latter part of the 1970s this multimedia approach was slighted in favor of more traditional, single discipline concepts—perhaps a signal of a new conservatism in audience and presenting organizations. The 1980s have seen a revival of interdisciplinary interests, often to emphasize spectacle and scale. Let's hope that these three young choreographers whose work in film is as provocative in a dance context as in a cinema one will have the opportunity to show their ideas to a broader audience in the future. ■

*Daryl Chin is a playwright who often writes about the arts.*

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# PROGRAMMING INDEPENDENTS AMERICAN STYLE



## An American Way of Playing

*PBS dramatic series now offers unique pool of feature film production money, right of final cut and a chance to pursue a theatrical release before broadcast.*

ROB EDELMAN

On American Playhouse, you will see no *Flashdances*, *Halloween X*VI's or *Conan the Barbarians*. There are neither the feature-length music videos nor the teenager-in-lust comedies and special effects-laden epics that Hollywood feels are the best bets for cracking *Variety*'s chart of 50 top-grossing films. American Playhouse is instead a source of funding for independent filmmakers who simply want to tell a story or massage their viewers' minds. Now in its third season on public television, it is unique in that it offers filmmakers a more-than-fair contract and the right of final cut. Scripts can be looser, and cover wider topics, than on most PBS series. American Playhouse is non-commercial, yet it has a national television audience. And there is even a potential for theatrical distribution.

According to David M. Davis, executive director of the series, anyone can submit a script to American Playhouse. Everything gets read. There are, however, a few rules. The film has to be "American" in content, in that it must say something about life in these United States. It must not be a documentary or a one-person show, and it must fit into a one-hour, 90-minute or two-hour timeslot. Nudity and obscenity must be avoided: you can use "damn," but not "goddamn." "We are now doing 21 shows a year," Davis explains, "and processing over 1,000 scripts. Eighty to 90% are eliminated on the first cut. The remaining ones go up the chain."

An advisory committee meets four times a year to evaluate proposals. This group includes Phyllis J. Geller of KCET, Los Angeles; Charles Morris of South Carolina's ETV; Fred Barzyck of WGBH, Boston; Jac Venza of WNET, New York; and various American Playhouse staffers. They offer feedback, but don't render verdicts. "I suppose I have the real final say in what's accepted," admits Davis, a former producer and director for public television who has also been responsible for dispensing \$150 million in grants for the Ford Foundation. "Lindsay Law [Playhouse's executive producer and

previous head of WNET's drama department] decides, with my concurrence. He and I rarely, if ever, disagree."

"They are selective," explains Amram Nowak, director of *The Cafeteria*. "As with any organization of this type, it's tough to get on the inside. But they are fair in regards to their own accessibility." Adds Thomas Fucci, producer of *Nightsongs*, "Their screening process is hard. They're not just handing out dollars. But this is because they're looking for good material."

American Playhouse has yet to produce the work of a first-time filmmaker. "We would be open to this," says Davis. "It would depend on the director's background. Lynne Littman [director of *Testament*] had never made a drama, but she knew the filmmaking medium backwards and forwards from her documentary work. She was a risk, but her script was so compelling that even if she did a pedestrian job it would have been a good show."

### ATTEMPTS TO ATTRACT OUTSIDE \$\$

A filmmaker whose script has been approved receives \$400,000 from American Playhouse, which is itself "made possible" by the nation's public television stations, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Additional funding for each project must be solicited from a variety of sources: the NEH, public television stations, foundations, state arts councils, private investors and foreign organizations like the BBC. The highest budget—\$1.7 million—was for *Puddin'head Wilson*, for which director Alan Bridges received NEH money, foreign and foundation money. For *El Norte*, Gregory Nava received additional funds from Cinecom, a distribution company.

Once that contract is signed, American Playhouse will in no way tamper with the creative process. "The agreement states that they will take our suggestions into consideration," explains Davis. "That's as far as we go. But we have approved the script before the

contract is signed, and it may have gone through two or three rewrites." Explains Amram Nowak, "Once you are funded, they don't try to destroy the creativity of the filmmaker. They trust their original judgments."

But alteration requests do arise. David Fishelson and Zoe Zinman's *City News*, originally 64 minutes, had to be recut to 58 minutes to fit into an hour timeslot. "They flew me up to WGBH [Boston] where it was done," reports Fishelson. "Everything I asked for, I got. And I kind of even like this cut better. It was too good to believe."

Not all American Playhouse films originate in-house. *City News* and Mary Lampson's *Until She Talks* are acquisitions. *Nightsongs* and Gregory Nava's *El Norte* were originally projects of Utah's Sundance Institute, created to help support independent filmmakers. "We have no formal relationship with them," says Davis. "We just have similar interests. With these films, Sundance wasn't in a position to implement anything. We were."

"We like to initiate, but we are now acquiring four to five outside films a year. We pay \$100,000 maximum, but sometimes much less. It was a terrific experience for Huck [Fairman, director of *Refuge*]. It was a great break for Jon [Hanson] and Rob [Nilsson, directors of *Northern Lights*]. They even got the Neil Simon award." This prize, worth \$25,000, is given to the best script among all programs aired in a season.

### TELEPLAYS OR FEATURE FILMS?

The name American Playhouse stems from public television's wish to create original teleplays, similar to the *Playhouse 90* of TV's "Golden Age." Lately, though, several of Playhouse's films—*Testament*, *El Norte*, Robert Young's *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*—have been released theatrically. The last even opened after its television broadcast.

"A lot of good people want to make movies, not TV shows," says Davis. "Our decision to go theatrical came about when people like Jan Egleson and Victor Nunez said, 'Can we do it this way?' and we said, 'Why not?' Also, investors will put money into movies and not into TV shows. We're supposed to be creative with our financing—as Ronald Reagan keeps telling us."

"Traditionally, movies that have played in cinema houses do better on TV because they have word-of-mouth. We get a lot of identification with these films, as our name is on the screen, on the posters. We can compete, quality-wise, with anything from Hollywood. Look at Jane Alexander's Oscar nomination for *Testament*."

"Louis Malle, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Ingmar Bergman have all been supported by TV. It's something public service broadcasters ought to do more of." But unlike Malle, Fassbinder and Bergman, American Playhouse filmmakers are neither superstars



# INDEPENDENTS AMERICAN STYLE

in the commercial cinema establishment nor critics' darlings.

Generally, these filmmakers rate the series' staff a solid four stars. "I really think they've achieved an extraordinary rapport with us," says Amram Nowak. "They've been wonderful," notes Victor Nunez, whose *A Flash of Green*, based on a John D. MacDonald mystery novel, is now in production. "Basically, they've said, 'Just go make the film.'" Jesus Trevino, director of *Sequin*, describes them as "supportive," while Thomas Fucci calls them "respectful." David Fishelson adds that they are "egoless, not seven-headed monsters. They are for the filmmaker."

## SOME MINORITY INPUT

But not all filmmakers have kind words for American Playhouse. "At one point they put out a call for Asian-American authors to submit work," explains writer Ernest Abuba. "They were all rejected." According to David Davis, "We now have three films in development by Asian-Americans." Yet Abuba observes that "anything that has happened there is an aftereffect of the *Nightsongs* stink." (During the production of this American Playhouse drama set in New York's Chinatown, there was much friction between the non-Asian filmmakers and both the local community and Asian-Americans involved in the production. See the May, 1983 *Independent*.)

"American Playhouse had hired someone with a supposedly Hispanic surname [Crispin Larangeira] to read material," recalls filmmaker Pablo Figueroa. "But this person was not Hispanic. I wrote a screenplay that was accepted by Sundance, but I couldn't get it past him. I gave him a list of people to get in touch with, but nothing came of this." Abuba adds that "the power bloc there is not doing a thorough job in seeking out what's representative of a mass society."

"I don't understand any criticism," says Victor Nunez, "except to say that the desperation for all filmmakers is mounting. Compared to other public television situations, American Playhouse is positive and encouraging regarding Third World filmmakers. Just look at their record."

Nunez, as well as Jesus Trevino, Gregory Nava, Ntozake Shange, Ossie Davis, Gordon Parks, James Baldwin, Lloyd Richards, Victor Villasenor, Oz Scott and Michael Schultz have all been associated with the series. "Marva Nabili [director of *Nightsongs*] is an Iranian woman," points out Thomas Fucci. "How much more Third World can you get?"

And their scenarios? Films with Third World characters and themes include *For Colored Girls*... (the lives of six black women); *The Killing Floor* (the rise of a black stockyard worker in an all-white union); *Solomon Northrup's Odyssey* (the life of a freeborn black

(Continued on page 27)



Bill Duke's *The Killing Floor* tells the story of Chicago slaughterhouse workers struggling to unionize during World War I. In Michael Roemer's *Haunted*, two women become embroiled in a troubled mother-daughter relationship. Workers in a southern textile mill buck management in Barbara Kopple's *Keeping On*. *City News*, a film about a failing alternative newspaper by David Fishelson and Zoe Zinman, was acquired by Playhouse.





# A Talk with Alan Fountain of British Channel 4

*The commissioning editor for smaller independents explores producer relations, alternative programming, the British political context and pressure for balanced programs.*

KATHLEEN HULSER

As the motley color bars which form Channel Four's logo announce: "This is the *un*-uniform Channel, the one that's made up of this and that." Independents are hot on the trail of the pounds that go into making "that"—and US indies haven't been entirely excluded. But more important than the straight production cash is the set-up. The Channel has now been in operation for over 18 months, long enough for some its predilections to come to the fore.

Channel Four's commissioning editor for the grant-aided sector, Alan Fountain, attended the Havana Film Festival last December, both to represent films from the Channel's Latin American series and to scout new talent. In this interview he explores some of the positive aspects—and some of the constraints—of "alternative programming."

One constraint, endemic to broadcasting, is scarce air time. Fountain says he is overwhelmed with material he would like to program, and wishes that the unusual fare was more widely dispersed among other programs

on the Channel. Fountain's main slot is *The Eleventh Hour*, a variable-length program which runs at 11 pm on a weekday, an hour the editor considers too late for most early-to-bed Brits. But despite the late hour, the program claims a viewership of some 400,000.

Although series formats have in some ways been the bane of US indies' PBS appearances—usually consisting of meaningless shoe-horning of product into a mindlessly hosted horror—intelligent commissioning and selection of series can win viewers without compromising an independent's vision. When *The Eleventh Hour* does wrap-arounds Fountain prefers that they consist of material the filmmaker chooses. Consider the series assembled in the first year: Latin America from a native Latino point of view; sexuality from a feminist standpoint (Fountain spent 210,000 pounds for six 50-minute videotape documentaries—surely the largest sum lavished on a made-by-feminists project in broadcasting history); films on Northern Ireland which consider such questions as the distinction be-

tween a "terrorist" and a "freedom fighter"; and *Commodities*, a series exploring the economic, geographic and political aspects of sugar, tea, coffee and gin. The Channel has been forking over 30,000 pounds a week to program *The Eleventh Hour*. For a relatively modest one-hour documentary made in the United Kingdom, Fountain estimates a budget of 40,000-45,000 pounds, whereas the most expensive fiction to date cost 220,000 pounds for an hour. The Channel also buys films from outside, although not as much as it did during the start-up year. Pre-sale/commission combinations might attract 10,000-20,000 pounds. Meanwhile, the workshops (see sidebar) are receiving approximately 625,000 pounds per year in subsidies.

Commissioning editors at the Channel were recruited for their ability to assemble resources from diverse sectors of society, and Channel Four head Jeremy Isaacs has given them a lot of latitude. Alan Fountain is an independent documentarian who comes from a workshop background and participated in the Independent Filmmakers' Association during the planning period of the Channel. While many producers have commented favorably on the quality and breadth of their respective editors, there have been complaints about delays in response time, inconsistent decisions and clarity about what the editors are looking for. In an article in last February's *AIP & Co.* (the journal of the Association of Independent Producers, the largest producers' trade organization), Justin Dukes, managing director of Channel Four, admits that the proportion of new ideas to the "needed" category is still only about 20-30%, and that the commissioning editors are communicating their needs first to the companies they prefer, rather than relying on any sort of open solicitation. Independents are naturally concerned about how often they can expect to work with the Channel and how to obtain an insider's track on new "needed" projects. Only time will tell how these questions will be resolved—as well as the larger issue of where the British Film Institute production board will fit in. But the good news about production opportunities and creative freedom is heartening—especially on this side of the Atlantic, where the very existence of public broadcasting is periodically threatened.

**KATHLEEN HULSER:** You are responsible for commissioning and acquiring independent film and video at Channel Four. Have your actually acquired any video?

**ALAN FOUNTAIN:** Very little. We've begun to commission some video in Britain. We've mainly talked about supporting some video workshops.

**KH:** Could you give me an example of something that you've run that originated in ¼" from a workshop?



*So That You Can Live*, an essay/documentary about dying Welsh mining town by Cinema Action, is an example of the unusual forms welcomed onto the air by British Ch. 4.



## INDEPENDENTS BRITISH STYLE

AF: One is a two-part program called *The Irish in England*. The first tape is about the experience of Irish immigration into England in the postwar period and relies on oral history. The second program deals with Irish people living in England. These tapes were produced at one of the workshops that we finance.

Another example is *In a City Called Sheffield*. It's about a city which has been very badly affected by the decline of the British steel industry. A six-part program called *Making Cars* was made in an unusual way by a group called the TV History Workshop. The group was established in Oxford, where one of the great British car plants, Leyland, is situated. The workshop made it known that it wanted to make a program with the workers about the history and current concerns within Leyland. Workers came into the workshop for interviews, and then came back to look at and modify them. It became a kind of collective process, and the resulting series looked at the history of the plant and of the car industry, current conditions, and relationships between union and management. A lot of video projects have emphasized the idea of greater access to TV for working people.

We do a lot of seasons. We've just finished a season of Latin American cinema: documentaries, features and shorts in Spanish with subtitles. Another season we did *Women on Film*, six weeks of films made mostly by feminists. We're planning a season of African cinema. We tend to alternate our seasons with two, three or four weeks of individual films (either commissioned or bought). In January [1984] we're going to run a six-week commissioned feminist series called *Sexuality*, a documentary series about sexuality and sexual representation. The problem is that I've basically got too much [material to fit into] *The Eleventh Hour* once a week, and occasional community slot programming.

KH: How do you work with workshops? It's not entirely clear to me the difference between commissioning and acquiring, because you are contributing money to the workshops' general production funds. For example, do you hold pre-production meetings with workshops? Do you have project approval on things they will later be submitting to the Channel?

AF: The whole development of the workshops [grew out of] an argument from independents that they need two things: one, full-time, continuity employment, and two, an arm's-length relationship with the people putting up the money. So the difference is that with the workshops, we commit ourselves to one, two or three contracts. We're just about to start a whole new application procedure.

It's a strange system which came out of a lot of meetings with the trades unions. The way it operates is that a workshop comes in with a program of work. Sometimes proposals will

## How Workshops Work

Although England has multiple public broadcasting channels, smaller independents haven't always had access to them. But by the late seventies, when planning for Channel Four was well underway, it was clear that independent creative voices must be allowed onto the airwaves. What the British call the "grant-aided sector" (i.e. smaller independents) negotiated a very unusual relationship to the new channel, providing for subsidies along with a maximum of creative freedom and an arms-length link with the Channel staff.

In Great Britain many independents operate through regionally-based workshops, which are roughly equivalent to our media centers (although documentary film and video production appears to predominate over art/experimental work). To maintain a viable cultural existence, the overstrained workshop sector required several things from the new channel: equipment aid, regular income and a broader audience. But workshop members weren't willing to sacrifice creative autonomy to achieve these goals.

One primary stumbling block to reaching an agreement with Channel Four was ACTT (the Association of Cinematographic and Television Technicians), England's version of IATSE. How were independents to accommodate the onerous staffing and production provisions of ACTT, an organization which would certainly determine labor policies at the new channel? What happened is a model compromise worked out with a traditional union—much to the astonishment of pessimistic indies and the Independent Filmmakers Association (a trade group representing smaller producers).

Murray Martin, an independent who works with the Amber Films workshop in Newcastle, took up the question of union concessions as his mission before the Channel had evolved into its present form. Martin and his allies approached the Labour Party which, after much discussion, agreed to lobby for five million pounds for the new channel. And as the Channel took shape, ACTT argued that Channel Four reserve time for grant-aided filmmaking.

The "Workshop Declaration" of 1981 is the resulting agreement on terms, conditions and pay that ACTT negotiated with independents. In return for signing the concession, independents working through participating workshops and regional arts associations obtained three things: legitimate union status (which was important for the many independents who often dealt with problems of workers but were not themselves members of a trade union); a foot-in-the-door at Channel Four (ACTT and Labour Party backing were crucial in establishing a regular,

substantial indie presence on the Channel); and union backing when bargaining with funding bodies, especially at the regional level. The Channel itself views the agreement as a "unique cultural partnership" which "makes a significant contribution towards strengthening regional film culture from which it can confidently anticipate the emergence of a wide range of imaginative and unusual work."

Channel Four offers workshops a blend of commissioning and acquiring options. Workshops receive equipment and salary subsidies from the Channel to do "programs of work." A program of work is a curious critter but well worth closer inspection. It consists of several film or video pieces which can evolve slowly and emanate from the various members of a workshop. (Alan Fountain refers mostly to documentaries.) The subsidies for overhead may run as high as 75,000 pounds—before the work is sold to the Channel.

When a project nears completion, it's submitted to the commissioning editor and a sale price is agreed upon. Now, pause to consider the differences between this situation and a pure commission or acquisition and you will realize how beautifully tailored to the support of ongoing independent production this arrangement is. The workshop, or the filmmakers, retain foreign, home video, theatrical and other such rights, while commissioned films cede major rights to the Channel. Workshop members don't have to aim for tight project delivery deadlines, thus allowing them to keep in touch with the real evolution of events in the communities in which they are based. And, unlike an acquisition, this relationship with public broadcasters offers independents a level of professional support which a mere sale or occasional commission could not—while also assuring the Channel a regular supply of quality fare. Even better, audiences which don't frequent small theaters or video shows can see work which relates to their lives on the telly.

Programs from the workshops have included documentaries such as the innovative *So That You Can Live*, an essay reflection on a dying mining town produced by Cinema Action, and *Bred and Born*, an examination of mothers and daughters in East London by the Four Corners group. Independents have also found a place in miniseries with such works as *Cross and Passion* (part of *Ireland: The Silent Voices*), and in *Profiles*, a trio of films on artist/filmmakers. —K. Hulser

Information for this article was taken from an interview with Murray Martin, Channel Four catalogues, articles in AIP & Co., and readings from the British and American trade press.





# PROGRAMMING INDEPENDENTS BRITISH STYLE



be quite detailed and name particular projects, and other times the filmmakers will just say these are the sorts of things they want to develop. Let's say Channel Four puts X-thousand pounds into it. They then finish a couple of films. At that point, they offer them back to us, and we buy them. It's an incredibly complicated artificial scale. So there are two areas of the funding which are combined into one figure: one is the wage levels, and the other is the production money.

This is a new thing. I think the filmmakers, to begin with, were quite jealous about maintaining that separation. As things have developed, there's a reasonable relationship and trust.

**KH:** Who has final cut?

**AF:** The filmmakers. They have full film rights and the final decision is theirs. I make suggestions and discuss it, but at the end of the day they can say: "We're going to do this." I think that's important, because it gives workshop production that element of independence. That often works with outside commissions as well.

**KH:** What's the distinction between an acquisition and a workshop situation?

**AF:** The difference between a workshop production and a commission is that a commission is always for a particular project rather than a program of work. But I make less of a distinction than a lot of others do. I tend to work with most of my commissions by giving people a pretty high degree of freedom. I'll see the work a lot, but I don't like being on people's backs.

And the crucial difference with the commissions is contractual: the legal contract is dif-

ferent, the cash flow is different. The Channel financially monitors a commission very closely and could potentially take control of the film if it ran into trouble. Also, the Channel has most of the rights.

**KH:** What proportion of your total [programming] is acquisitions, and is that changing as the Channel gets older and more established?

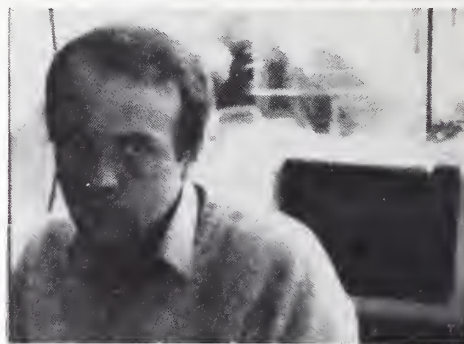
**AF:** It's a changing proportion. In the first year it was quite high—probably 50%. Next year it could be much less because we've got more new material coming through.

The other thing we've done a bit of is putting small amounts of co-production money into filmmakers abroad—Latin America, Africa, the States or Europe. We would put up perhaps 10,000-20,000 pounds which can make the crucial difference between something getting made or not. I hope that next year we might do six to 10 projects of that sort.

**KH:** Are the selection criteria you use discussed with other people in the Channel to balance out programming? Or are you the one identifying the social trend, saying, "Let's do a feminist series"?

**AF:** I've tended to have a rather high degree of freedom. There's never been a huge amount of discussion about selection. I've always thought there should be more. It tends to have been run very much as Jeremy Isaacs [head of Channel Four] wants. If I want to do a project I just talk to him. If he agrees, we go ahead—and he's agreed to most things. Sometimes we run into particular political problems; there are things I want to show that the Channel doesn't.

**KH:** Like what?



Alan Fountain, commissioning editor for the grant-aided sector at Ch. 4.

**AF:** They think I've done too much on Ireland. We ran a series on Ireland, a couple of documentaries, and they've made it very clear that they don't want to see a lot more of them in the near future.

**KH:** Do you have trouble running gay material?

**AF:** No, that's not really a problem. A videomaker, Stuart Marshall, is going to make a program looking at the way gayness has been represented and dealt with in Britain and to some extent in the States. A woman named Melanie Chapin made a very nice film called *Veronika for Rose* which dealt with teenage lesbians and their relationships with their parents. *Framed Youth*, by the Gay and Lesbian Youth Project, is an expression of joy about their sexuality. But the Channel is very wary about things like a Middle East film with an anti-Israeli, pro-Palestinian scene.

**KH:** Have you every done wrap-arounds, panels or intros as a result of touchiness about political matters?

**AF:** No. But there's a program called *Right of Reply* where people who don't like a program can come in and say why not. It's a separate program done about four times a year.

When Channel Four started there were a lot of assumptions made that the Channel would not be subject to the same sort of rules as the other TV companies—that it wouldn't have to insert balance into the programs, etc. There's been quite a battle around that. Essentially, my view is that the Channel hasn't completely lost that argument, but it's come close to losing it.

My own view (which is not one shared by most people within the Channel) is that we should have confronted the issue head-on to begin with, forced it and discussed it more, making it much more of a public issue. But that's not Channel Four style, the Channel never does that.

What's happened as a result is that *The Eleventh Hour* is seen as this one slot where people can be controversial and one-sided. That's part of the slot's identity, and it means that people can speak more openly. The Mal-



In the "Ireland: The Silent Voices" series, Ch. 4 listens sympathetically to Irish accounts of the "troubles" in Northern Ireland and explores the defects of mainstream media coverage of these issues.



## INDEPENDENTS BRITISH STYLE

vinas film [*Malvinas: History of a Betrayal*] would never have gotten shown on Channel Four anywhere but *The Eleventh Hour*. It would have been called totally unbalanced.

**KH:** It's interesting that "unbalanced" films have been shunted off into one program rather than considered within the function of the Channel as a whole.

**AF:** Well, the Channel still does battle—but if we had made the battle more upfront, we might have gotten further with it. Now they will say, "OK, you don't have to balance within one program, but you have to have a [nother] balancing program." That's a slight step forward. For instance, Ken Loach made a piece which basically attacked right-wing trades unions. But it hasn't been allowed to show because the authorities say, "If you make a program which somehow puts forth the 'other view' (whatever that may be), then you can show them both." This new argument means that you must make another program to show with your original one. Fortunately at the moment I have escaped that. But it's something of a problem.

The Channel is trying to deal with this problem in current affairs by having a new slot with one evening presented by a left-wing journalist, the next by a right, and the next, a liberal. That's doing just what the [Independent Broadcasting] wants: "All views will balance out," they say. My view, which hasn't made any headway at the Channel, is that we ought to see ourselves as a more politically progressive channel. We should be fighting against that, rather than saying OK. It's become an issue at the Channel because various executives have publicly said, "We're looking for right-wing programs." That's crazy. Originally, I think, it was seen as a structural tactic, but of course it backfired because people then asked: "Where are all these programs? When are you going to make them?" This was completely within Thatcherite Britain, although the government hasn't put direct pressure on the Channel. We have been cast in some of the press as the home of the left, the gays, the dissidents—seen as not very trustworthy politically. ■



American Robert Mugge has made two music films for Ch. 4: one on Al Green (above) and another on Gil Scott-Heron.

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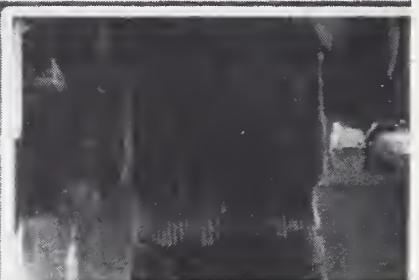
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Two films acquired by Playhouse: Beth Ferris & Richard Pearce's *Heartland*, about an unusual marital alliance on the frontier, and Mary Lampson's *Until She Talks*, an exploration of abuse of the grand jury process.

## Profitable Headache

The director of a low-budget, originally not-for-profit feature may encounter problems with disgruntled unions, actors or community members if it ends up making money. Such is the case with Lynne Littman's *Testament*, first made for American Playhouse but eventually released theatrically.

Residents of Sierra Madre, the California community in which the film was shot, have claimed that they were persuaded to furnish props and free services and to work as gofers and extras. But when the decision was made to open the film theatrically—and thus attempt to turn it into a money-maker—they were not informed.

Yet, according to Miranda Barry, director of program development for American

Playhouse, no deception was involved. "The film was made to be shown on television," Barry explains. "The theatrical exhibition was in the hands of Entertainment Events, Ltd., private investors who came in and bailed the film out when it was having financial problems." Entertainment Events provided Littman with \$278,000, about one-third of *Testament*'s budget. Eventually, Entertainment Events chose to exercise its theatrical release option; it is now allegedly negotiating with the involved parties regarding appropriate compensation.

A filmmaker's best recourse in such a situation? Honesty. Offer retroactive compensation in the event of any profits as part of any financial deal.—Rob Edelman



Low-paid and volunteer contributors to *Testament* demanded compensation when the low-budget feature turned out to be a money-maker, distributed theatrically by Paramount Pictures.





(American Playhouse, continued from page 21)

man kidnapped into slavery); *Medal of Honor Rag* (the plight of a black Vietnam veteran); *Keeping On* (the experiences of a black mill worker who joins a union, then loses his job); *For Us, The Living* (the life of Medgar Evers); *Seguin* (the story of 19th-century Mexican-American hero Juan Neopmuceno Seguin); *El Norte* (the experiences of two Guatemalan teenagers who trek to Los Angeles); and *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* (a folktale about a legendary gunfight between a Texas sheriff and a Mexican-American). Some, like Barbara Kopple and Horton Foote's *Keeping On*, are by First World filmmakers. Others, like *Gregorio Cortez*—directed by Young, scripted by Villasenor—are collaborations between First and Third World talents.

And what of American Playhouse's future? "I'd like to see this movie option expanded," Davis says. "I'd like to do more than 21 shows a year." The higher the profile American Playhouse attains via the movie option—with its resulting *New York Times* ads and potential for Academy Award nominations—the better position it will be in for soliciting more funds and putting more filmmakers to work. ■

Rob Edelman is an associate editor of Leonard Maltin's *TV Movies* and frequently writes about film.

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## FESTIVALS

# The Arts Are the Thing at Edinburgh

HEIDI J. LARSON

Over 150 short, documentary and feature films were screened at the 1983 Edinburgh Film Festival last summer, which opened with the British premiere of Nagisa Oshima's *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* and included a 22-film Oshima retrospective. The rest of the crowded festival schedule was quite diverse. Over one-third of the films were American, with major representation from throughout Europe and a sprinkling of films from Australia, Ecuador, South Africa and Hong Kong.

Edinburgh's Film Festival is part of what is often called the largest international arts festival in the world—the three-week Edinburgh Arts Festival—which fills the city's theaters, church halls, and streets with drama and musical performances, arts exhibitions, and festivals of books, television programs and films. All this brings quite an international crowd to Edinburgh, anxious to see as many shows, films and exhibitions as they can fit into their visit. But while the film festival box office benefits from the large crowds, the festival as an event in itself is somewhat overshadowed by the larger arts celebration.

Besides the special events, the selection of films for the general schedule showed a broad range of quality and theme, but the large number of films often meant that two or three quite unrelated films were screened at one showing. Tight and overlapping screening times were the price paid for the large selection. Public screenings ran from 2 pm to 11:30 pm in two adjacent cinema halls, and though you had to choose between simultaneous shows, the closeness of the halls made it quite manageable. Morning press screenings alleviated the tight schedule for press viewers by providing a second chance to see some of the films.

The centralized location for the film festival was a great advantage for meeting other film-

makers and press people. For the second year, the film festival was headquartered in Edinburgh's local repertory theater, the Filmhouse, which has a cafe as well as two screening rooms. The festival information desk, press and guest mailboxes, festival personnel and a message board were all based in the Filmhouse cafe and facilitated coordination among festival participants. A guest book for the press, filmmakers, distributors and other guests was also helpful in providing a record of who had arrived and where they were from.

Management and press officers were helpful in arranging press coverage for most visiting filmmakers. Although there was scant coverage by the American press, American films were well-covered by the British. The *Edinburgh Festival Times* gave headline coverage to American films in each of the weekly magazines published during the festival and BBC radio interviewed most American filmmakers who made it to the festival with their films.

As for contacts, one American filmmaker said, "I've been able to meet all the people I would have otherwise gone to London to see." But others were less pleased. "I would say that I am satisfied by the press coverage here, but dissatisfied with the festival as a meeting place," an American filmmaker said. "I wouldn't come back. I recommend that filmmakers enter their films, but don't come themselves. It's too expensive." (Edinburgh, with a very limited budget, can only pay a small part of its participants' airfares and a few days stipend for room and board.)

"Edinburgh is a festival for film buffs, not buyers," one American distributor commented. "It has never been a market festival and has never pretended to be," another added. "You might hook up with an independent UK distributor or be seen by an interested person from another festival, but that's it. It's not Berlin."

And, according to some disappointed filmmakers, the exciting exchange among filmmakers for which Edinburgh was known was missing last year. They said they missed the seminars and forums which, until a few years ago, made Edinburgh special. "There's not enough interest in filmmakers here," a British filmmaker said curtly. "Too many producers around."

To some extent, Edinburgh is what you make it. If you can afford to go, it's a fun festival to attend. If you hustle to track people down, you can make some contacts. The Filmhouse base helps give the film festival an iden-

tity of its own within the "Festival City" and helps you locate people. One filmmaker commented, "What I like about Edinburgh is that it's low-key. You don't get lost in the shuffle like you do at Cannes."

At the time of this writing, it had not been decided whether festival director Jim Hickey would visit New York for selections, or have a group shipment sent via FIVF. Please call or write the FIVF office for updated details. The official Edinburgh deadline is June 1; this year's festival will take place Aug. 19-Sept. 8. Contact: Jim Hickey or Ken Ingles, Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9BZ, Scotland, UK: tel: 031-228-6382; telex: 72165.

Heidi J. Larson is a freelance writer and photographer living in Connecticut.

## San Sebastian Still Reigns Despite Basque Upheavals

Once considered a world-class festival, the San Sebastian International Film Festival is now trying to regain its status, which was marred in recent years by political strife in Spain, decreased budgets and loss of its market. One new potential strong point is the institution of the San Sebastian Video Festival, which made its bow in 1982 as a sidebar to the main film event.

San Sebastian at 32 is somewhat of an aging movie star, its glamour and power of earlier years faded. Because of poor timing (slotted after such major fests as Venice and Deauville) and lack of a market, San Sebastian does not now attract the glitzy buying/selling activities or major film premieres it did in the past. Tensions with Basque separatists have been a gnawing public relations plague, particularly in 1982 when there were threats and demonstrations against the festival. Last year the demonstrations were more subdued, but a major flood in the Basque region just two weeks prior to the festival forced organizers to limit spending and social events.

San Sebastian's emphasis has always been on Hollywood fare, and remains so today. In 1983, American indie filmmakers were not a major presence. The 19 films in the official selection included Woody Allen's *Zelig*, Robert Jiras' *I Am the Cheese* and John G. Thomas' *Tin Man*. Godfrey Reggio's *Koyaanisquatsi* was the only American indie up for the \$7,000 cash prize in the New Director's section—a prize never awarded because of jury dissatisfaction with the general quality of the submissions. In addition to Reggio's film, Affinity Enterprises (a US indie distributor) brought John Sayle's *Lianna* and Susan Seidelman's *Smithereens*, which appeared in a special program called "The Other Way." Also presented in that section was Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky*, represented by its Spanish distributor. Jonathan Olsberg, Affinity's executive director, had no raves for the film program, although he reported that San Sebastian is "a lovely town."

Videomakers who were present for the



SL-1, shown at Edinburgh, recreates a true nuclear accident—caused, perhaps, by a suicidal technician.

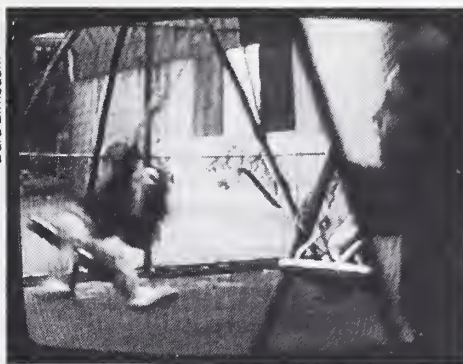


video festival and workshops expressed the same sentiments toward the city's beauty, but had mixed reactions toward the festival operations. The video screenings, which are kept quite separate from the film events, are held in the underground floor of an old but conveniently-located casino. The long cavernous space is divided into two rooms, housing about eight monitors for screenings and additional hardware for installation pieces.

A number of American videomakers were included in the International Video Contest, upon the invitation of programmer and organizer Guadalupe Echevarria who had travelled to the United States in search of tapes. Invitations to submit tapes to the competition did not include personal appearances. According to Dara Birnbaum, Echevarria approached a number of public agencies to get the government to cover travel expenses—as do most other countries—but to no avail. *[The US is one of the only countries in the world which does not subsidize the participation of film and video artists in foreign festivals. While FIVF's Festival Bureau does receive money from the NEA and NYSCA, the amount is not nearly enough to subsidize international shipping, travel or publicity—common items in our foreign counterparts' budgets. Of course these various nationalist efforts are largely a response to the cultural imperialism waged by the commercial movie and television industry in this country, and it's difficult to convince anyone here of the need to underwrite film and video export.—WL]* Spanish-speaking videomakers Juan Downey and Edin Velez were able to cover their expenses by teaching workshops at the festival.

A prize of 300,000 pesetas was offered for the best videotape, but, according to Birnbaum (whose tape *Damnation of Faust: Invocation* was an award winner), the jury decided to split the prize among a number of tapes in different styles. Accordingly the honors—and ostensibly the prize money—were split among four American and four European artists. But winning the prize did not necessarily mean money in the bank. Birnbaum was notified of her success in competition a month after the festival, but with no mention of the cash prize. Later she received a letter from the festival offering to purchase her tape for approximately \$250-300. The letter stated the oft-heard plea that her tape would contribute to fostering awareness of and appreciation for video throughout Spain; to Birnbaum, it sounded like her tape would end up in a low-paid package distribution deal. Furthermore, the letter did not clarify whether or not she sacrificed her prize money if she refused the purchase agreement.

Juan Downey had a similarly frustrating experience. Although promised travel expenses for his participation in a workshop, he received a ticket only to Madrid and had to cover the remaining leg to San Sebastian out-of-pocket. At the end of the festival he was given a check for his participation and told to cash it at the Spanish bank in New York City. When he attempted to do so, his check was



*Damnation of Faust: Invocation* was screened at San Sebastian. Will its new video sidebar resurrect the fest?

confiscated and he was accused by bank personnel of being a thief "trying to take pesetas out of poor Spain."

For Steina and Woody Vasulka, and Bill Viola—whose works were presented in special retrospective programs—the festival was more enjoyable. The public response was enthusiastic, particularly from Spanish young people. While San Sebastian's video and film events did not attract many buyers, the press coverage was very good. Viola got a television spot and coverage in several publications. Like Downey and Edin Velez, the Vasulkas conducted video workshops organized by the Basque government.

Even though San Sebastian got mixed reviews in logistics and organization, it was well-appreciated for ambience and intellectual interchange. "As always, more got done in cafes and restaurants than in the official proceedings," said Viola. Downey reported that he was able to make valuable contacts with European curators, and found the intellectual level of one-on-one meeting very inspiring. Woody Vasulka's only complaint was the "false and hypocritical Puritanism of the high-class hotel" where he was put up; in this very Catholic environment "an American would invite a woman up to his room to talk business and in 20 minutes the hotel 'sex squad' would be there."

San Sebastian's future status remains in question. There is a new director, the apparently very able Carlos Gortari. The International Federation of Film Producers' Associations (IFFPA) will not give Sebastian its "A" rating again, at least for now, and only time will tell whether or not the "queen of Spanish festivals" will regain its prestige and market.

—Renee Tajima

*Applications for the film festival should be submitted in June. Contact: Carlos Gortari, Festival de Cine de San Sebastian, Apartado de Correos 397, San Sebastian, Spain; tel: 42.96.25; telex: 36228 CAMIN/E c/o FESTINCI.*

*Applications for the video festival are due by July 1, and application forms are available in the AIVF office. Contact: Guadalupe Echevarria, Festival de Vido San Sebastian, P.O. Box 1023, San Sebastian, Spain; tel: 42.96.25; telex: 36228 CAMIN/E c/o FESTINCI. Echevarria visited the US last year to select tapes, but we don't yet know if or when she will be back this year. Please contact*

*AIVF or San Sebastian, or watch the June issue of The Independent for more information.*

## Gloss and Class at The Venice Biennale

*"And when one says that the cinema's vocation is international, one means that its works must bring to all countries the image of national genius which inspired them."*

—Rene Clair

The words of the renowned French film director and critic, which appeared in the preface to the Venice Biennale's 1960 program, best describe the philosophy that has made the Venice Biennale Film Festival a landmark in cinema history. Formally known as La mostra internazionale d'arte cinematografica di Venezia (The International Film Art Exhibit of Venice), the festival originated in the 1930s as an appendix to the Biennale d'arte, which was itself conceived at the end of the 19th century with the sole purpose of gathering and exposing the finest, most representative collection of contemporary art in the world. The Venice Biennale was the first and is the oldest film exhibition of its kind, a thriving ancestor of the modish Cannes and Berlin festivals. Venice is less commercial and competitive than the former, but less open to independent work than the latter.

The Biennale admits about 100 films from all over the world which are exhibited daily throughout the 10-day festival. Although each year the format and programming of the festival shifts in accordance with the expectations of each new director, selected films fall primarily into competitive and non-competitive categories. The official awards include the Golden Lion (Grand Prix); the Silver Lion given to the first or second work by a filmmaker to encourage new talent (unanimously awarded in 1983 to Martinique's Euzhan Palcy for *Sugar Cane Alley*); and best technical contribution.

The majority of the selected films are screened in the non-competitive section. (In fact, the Biennale began simply as an exhibit of films without competitions or prizes.) The non-competitive category should not be underestimated by new filmmakers, for it functions as a showcase providing public and press exposure. The screenings are attended by thousands of visitors who flock to Venice each year for this event, and a filmmaker attending the festival can expect maximum press coverage through the daily press conferences.

Non-competitive categories include documentary, Third World, and youth-oriented films, while the Information Section exhibits a varied program ranging from masterpieces to avant-garde experimental films, interesting commercial productions, and the first films of new directors and actors. In 1982 and 1983, this section included such American independent and Hollywood productions as *The Atomic Cafe* (Pierce and Kevin Rafferty and Jayne Loader), Louis Malle's *My Dinner with Andre*, Mura Dehn's *The Spirit Moves* and Robert Altman's *Health*.



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The Biennale's atmosphere can best be described as "professional." Director Gian Luigi Rondi has chosen an international selection jury composed of such filmmaking giants as Bernardo Bertolucci, Nagisa Oshima, Ousmane Sembene, Mrinal Sen and Alain Tanner. Rondi also hopes to solicit the participation of American directors such as Woody Allen and Francis Ford Coppola, and hopes to encourage the attendance of American producers, who in the past have often been unwilling to appear at this predominantly non-competitive, non-market-oriented festival.

—Giovanna Jones-Glasser ■

Last year, Venice representative Mario Longardi visited the US in early June. At the time of this writing, however, his 1984 itinerary had not been set. Contact the FIVF office or Gian Luigi Rondi, Director, or Wanda Zanirato, Settore Cinema-Spettacolo-TV, San Marco, Ca' Giustinian, 30100 Venezia, Italy, tel: 41-70.03.11; telex: 410685 BLE VE I. A sidebar program of more alternative or avant-garde feature films is selected by Enzo Ungari, Via Giovanni Miani, 40, Roma, Italy; tel: 5781930. The 1984 Festival will take place August 27-September 7.

Giovanna Jones-Glasser is the West Coast representative for Cordell Haller, a public relations company serving independent filmmakers. She is particularly interested in forging cultural connections between Italy and the US and is about to publish her second novel.

## IN BRIEF

This month's notices have been compiled by Deborah Erickson and Wendy Lidell with the help of the FIVF files. **Listings do not constitute an endorsement, and since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.**

### Domestic

● **CELEBRATION FILM FESTIVAL**, July, part of the Allentown Festival of the Arts is sponsored in part by grant from the PA Council of the Arts. Animated, documentary & theatrical films in 8 & 16mm vie for over \$1200 in prizes. Deadline: June 15. Contact: Celebration Film Festival, 309 S. 17th St., Allentown PA 18104.

● **CHICAGOLAND EDUCATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, October, encourages teachers to use educational films presented in numerous categories for various grade levels. Send work in 16mm under 45 min. This festival is likely to grow in importance after the demise of the now-defunct Filmfest Midwest, once also in Chicago. Entry fee: \$20. Deadline: May 30 (early June OK). Contact: Fred Rosengarden or Tommie Ward, 1819 W. Pershing Rd., 3rd fl., West Bldg., Chicago, IL 60609; (312) 890-8420.

● **CINDY COMPETITION**, November 17, sponsored by Information Film Producers of America (IFPA), shows films & tapes for presentation of information rather than entertainment. Documen-

tary, education, industrial & business films in over 30 categories awarded gold, silver & bronze Cindy plaques. 16mm films, 3/4" videotapes, 35mm filmstrips or slide-films, audio productions & multi-image shows accepted. Entry fees: \$70/IFPA members, \$90/non-members, student rate TBA. Deadline: June 15. Contact: Michael Nilan, 900 Palm Ave., Suite B, So. Pasadena CA 91030; (213) 441-2274.

● **HAWAII INT'L FESTIVAL**, November, is a non-competitive event emphasizing films about human interaction in cross-cultural conflicts "when strangers meet." Festival mixes entertainment & education, combining industry workshops & social criticism, providing both parties reeking of champagne & sober seminars, lectures & group discussions. Fest receives int'l press coverage, with an estimated audience of 20,000. Awards of recognition presented. Features, documentaries & shorts from the US, Asia & the Pacific that attempt to promote understanding between countries & the "strangers meeting" theme are invited & may be submitted in 3/4" video for preview. Festival pays for transport of accepted films. No entry fee. Contact: Tom Jackson, Film Selection Chair, Hawaii Int'l Film Festival, East-West Center, 1777 East-West Rd., Honolulu HI 96848; (808) 944-7608.

● **INTERCOM**, September 11, 12, 14, once part of Chicago Film Festival, gives industrial & information producers & companies a chance for recognition for expertise in in-house projects. Send 16 or 35mm film, 35mm filmstrip or slide presentations, 3/4" & VHS cassette, NTSC, PAL & SECAM. Fees range from \$60-\$90. Awards: gold, silver, bronze Hugos; gold & silver plaques. Deadline: June 4. Contact: Reed Larson, 415 N. Dearborn St., Chicago IL 60610; (312) 644-3400.

● **MARIN COUNTY NATIONAL FILM COMPETITION**, June 30-July 4, gives independent filmmakers an opportunity to show films publicly while providing diverse entertainment for fairgoers. Awards: student films: max. \$800; animated: max. \$900; indies: max. \$1000. 16mm/max. 30 min. Entry fee: \$10 per film. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Yolanda F. Sullivan, Marin County Fair & Exposition, Fairgrounds, San Rafael CA 94903; (415) 499-6400.

● **NEW JERSEY VIDEO & VIDEO FESTIVAL & CONFERENCE**, June 15, held for the first time this year, is an effort to bring local producers together to show their works & discuss range of issues including production funding, distribution, broadcast & cable outlets & access to equipment. Jury will award prizes in variety of categories. Enter in early May. For more information contact: Tami Gold-Ahern, Newark Mediaworks, P.O., Box 1019, Newark, NJ 07101; (201) 690-5474.

● **NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL**, September 28-October 14, 22nd edition of this premiere American festival. Deadlines: short films: July 1; features: July 15. See the June *Independent* for more information & contact: Joanne Koch, Wendy Keys or Marcy Blum at the Film Society of Lincoln Center, 140 West 65th St., NY NY 10023; tel: (212) 877-1800, ext. 489. The fest's new advisor for independent film is Lawrence Sapadin, executive director, FIVF.

● **PHILAFILM**, July, will be featuring films from the Brazilian state of Bahia this year. Founded in 1975 as a forum for the exhibition & promotion of Third World cinema, Philafilm presents indepen-





Bette Gordon's *Variety*, shown at Toronto, charts one woman's obsession with pornography.

dent films & tapes to the Philadelphia community & awards prizes to works in variety of categories. Work may be submitted in S-8, 16 or 35mm, & ¾" videotape; fees range from \$20-100. Deadline: May 15. Contact: Brenda Collins, Int'l Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers, 1315 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 893-5500/5537.

● **PUBLIC RELATIONS FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL**, October, sponsored by Public Relations Society of America, honors best films & videotapes produced for public relations purposes by companies & organizations. Enter only sponsored 16mm films or ¾" videocassettes in one of 8 categories. Fees: PRSA MEMBERS/\$125, non-members/\$150. Deadline: June 15. Contact: Marilynne Gamblin, PRSA, 845 Third Ave., NY, NY 10022; (212) 826-1750.

## Foreign

● **BESANCON INT'L MUSICAL & CHOREOGRAPHIC FILM FESTIVAL**, September, seeks documentaries or features relating to music & choreography. Max 3 entries per country in 16 or 35mm or videocassette. Prizes awarded by int'l jury; 1 by public vote. No entry fee. Deadline: June 15. Contact: Pierre LaGrange, 2d rue Isenbart, 2500 Besancon, France; tel: (81)80.73.26.

● **BRAZIL SUPER-8 FILM FESTIVAL**, August, now in its 11th year, will be accepting int'l entries for the 3rd time. Toni Treadway, *The Independent's* S-8 columnist, said event is well-organized & that "the Brazilians are producing some beautiful & complex narrative S-8 films." Winning films in 10 categories tour Brazil for 6 months after festival. Enter films under 20 min. by June. Contact: Abrao Berman, Grife-Acao S-8 Center of Cinema Studies, Rua Estados Unidos 2240, 01427 Sao Paulo-SP, Brazil; tel: 852-1704.

● **CANADIAN INT'L ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL-TORONTO 84**, August 13-18. This is the reincarnation of the Ottawa Int'l Animation  
**MAY 1984**

## THE INDEPENDENT

Festival which disappeared in a cloud of debt after the 1982 edition. Event has reputation for friendliness & aims to educate the public on theme, "Animation is not only for Saturday morning." Festival is located in heart of Toronto. Prizes will be awarded to 2 best films in each category, in addition to Public Award, Grand Prix & Best Video. Jury often gives special awards. 1982 Ottawa Grand Prix went to Frederich Basch's *Crac*, Public Award went to Zbigniew Rybcynski's *Tango*, which also won an Academy Award. Films under 5 min., films over 5 min., films for children & commercials under 5 min., accepted in 16 or 35mm & ¾" video. Fest also seeks first films in 16 or 35mm only, & requests "no pencil tests." No fee. Deadline: June 15. Contact: Kelly O'Brien or Frederik Manter, 110 Willow Ave., Toronto, Ontario M4E 3K3, Canada; (514) 364-5924.

● **CORK INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, October, presents new trends in short & documentary filmmaking & promotes interest in cultural, artistic, informative & sports subjects. Deadline: early June, so it's advisable to contact fest ASAP. Contact: Cork Film Festival, Festival House, 38 MacCurtain St., Cork, Ireland; tel: (0002) 502221.

● **FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL D'AVANT-GARDE (FIAG)**, October 10-20, presents experimental work in film, video, photography & multi-media at the Salon Art, Video et Cinema (SAVEC), located in a Paris suburb. Presentations are aimed at both the public & other artists, & great interest is expressed in multi-disciplinary work. Photos, film in 16mm & S-8, & video in ¾", PAL, SECAM or NTSC should be submitted by June 15. Work also solicited for regular screenings at the Salon, & may be submitted until September. Contact: Michel Amarger or Frederik Devaux, FIAG, Salon Art Video et Cinema, B.P. 41, 92114 Clichy Cedex, France, tel: 731.29.76.

● **SALERNO INT'L FILM FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**, July-August. Established 13 years ago, sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism & recognized by UNICEF & UNESCO, fest's aim is to deal w/youth & childhood-oriented themes & to give people a chance to show work they have produced themselves. Categories: story, animation, teaching-information, documentary & childhood problems. Medals, certificates, & sponsored prizes awarded to film selected by juries of children & youth. No fee; entrant pays all postage. Deadline: June. Contact: Claudio Gubitosi, Artistic Director, 84095 Giffone Valle Piana, Salerno, Italy; tel: (089)224322.

● **TORONTO FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS**, September 6-15 is one of the largest festivals in the world, boasting app. 165,000 attendants in 1983. Toronto is a film buff city, w/sidebars, film galas, series & retrospectives complementing the main event. 2 sections of interest to independents: "Contemporary World Cinema" presents new international films; of 45 titles in last year's CWC program, 9 were American, all by independents. They included *My Brother's Wedding* (Charles Burnett), *Variety* (Bette Gordon), *The Sky on Location* (Babette Mangolte), *Born in Flames* (Lizzie Borden) & *Wild Style* (Charlie Ahearn). Short films programmed with many features. Documentaries shown in a somewhat less extensive section, "Stranger Than Fiction: A Documentary View"; American independents well-represented in this section too, with such titles as *Rockaby* (D.A. Pennebaker & Chris Hewgedus), *Seventeen* (Joel DeMott & Jeff Kreines) & *N!ai: The Story of a*

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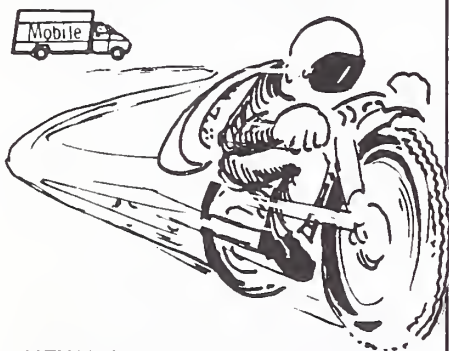
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**THE INDEPENDENT**

*Kung Woman* (John Marshall & Adrienne Miesmer). Toronto plans to discontinue its video section this year since need for video programming is now being filled by newly-formed Video Culture Canada (see *The Independent*, Jan.-Feb. '84).

Distributors figure prominently at the fest, & good press coverage also helps make it worth bucking Canadian customs, one of the great gatekeepers of the world. No official competition, but there are a number of prizes, such as the International Film Critics Award & Labatt's Most Popular Film Award, which helped launch Ira Wohl's *Best Boy* in 1981. Programmers Kay Armatage & Jim Monro will be at the offices of the National Film Board of Canada in NY to view films during the last week in June. They prefer to be contacted through the festival office in Toronto first with a letter and publicity materials; they will then contact you & let you know where & when they want to see your film. The official entry deadline extends through Aug. 1. Contact: Festival of Festivals, 69 Yorkville Ave., Ste. 206, Toronto, Canada M5R 1B7; (416) 967-7371; telex: 06-219724.

• **TOURFILM INT'L FESTIVAL OF TOURIST FILMS**, October, promotes tourism & is recognized by all Gov't Committees for Tourism in socialist states. Expected audience: 10,000. Send work in 16 & 35mm, max. 25 min. in categories of documentary, reportage, animated & acted. Entry fee: \$50; fest pays return postage. Deadline: June. Contact: Ing. Lidmila Vaiglove, Gov't Committee for Tourism, Staromestske Namesti 6, 11001 Prague 1, Czechoslovakia.

• **TRIESTE INT'L SCIENCE FICTION FILM FESTIVAL**, July, did not take place in 1983 due to lack of funding, but *Variety* reported that 1984 edi-

tion is likely. Festival explores how reported margin between fantasy & reality becomes smaller due to rush of technological progress. Entries in 16, 35 & 70mm accepted in both short & feature lengths. Scientific & documentary films sought as well as science fiction. Awards given. No entry fee. Deadline, June. Contact: Flavia Paulon, Calle Avogaria 1633, 30123 Venice, Italy; tel: (040)750.002, 795.863.

• **TYNESIDE FILM FESTIVAL**, October, is dedicated to showcasing independent film & video, & awards large cash prizes. The Tyne Award, worth 5000 pounds (about \$7500), was awarded in 1983 to Chris Reeves for *The Cause of Ireland*. Jackie McKimmie's *Station* won the 100-pound (about \$1500) inaugural Tyne Short Film Award. America's Skip Sweeney won the 150-pound (about \$225) Tyne Video Award for *My Father Sold Studebakers*. Tyneside's director, Sheila Whitaker, who will soon be assuming command of the London Film Festival, always seems interested in great diversity; this year she especially seeks works by women. Tyneside receives good press & winning entries are usually shown on England's Channel 4. Tyneside conducts a selection process for film exhibition by a panel of judges who view features & shorts in 8, 16 & 35mm & U-matic & VHS tapes. No entry fee; fest pays return postage only if film is selected. Tyneside's publicist has asked that the following shipping instructions be marked *clearly* on all films: "For Exhibition; Visual & Auditory Materials; Relief From Duty Has Been Applied For; Destination: Newcastle-Upon-Tyne"; & the address: Tyneside Film Festival, Tyneside Cinema, 10/12 Pilgrim St., Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE1 6QG, England; tel: (0632)321507. Also include the VAT (value added tax) number: 1781689. ■

**NOTICES**

**NOTICES** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others included as space permits. Send notices to **THE INDEPENDENT**, c/o FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th Floor, New

York NY 10012. For further info, call (212) 473-3400. Deadline: 8th of second preceding month (e.g. May 9 for July/August). Edited by Mary Guzzy.

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easy editing, transparent performance w/digital color processing, built-in proc amp, complete operator control of all video signals. \$3500. Contact: Ernest Gusella, (212) 925-9095, NY.

• **FOR SALE:** Custom-made animation stand. Motorized column, hand-cranked compound. Price negotiable. Call: (212) 982-3014, NY.

• **FOR SALE:** Production forms for short films & low-budget features. Set of 40 masters, \$12.50 or send long SASE for sample. Pads of individual forms also available. Contact: Don Kirk Enterprises, Dept. 96, Rt. 9, Box 127, Canyon Lake, TX 78130.

• **FOR SALE:** Good used KCA-60 ¾" videotapes. Erased. Good for dubs. \$10/ea. \$9 for orders over 10 pcs. Contact: Media Bus, (914) 679-7739, NY.

• **FOR SALE:** Panasonic 3990 low-light camera w/single tube, 10-pin cable, batteries, cases, mike, \$100. Bell & Howell Angenieux 25mm f/0.95 C-mount lens. \$100. Sackler "Hollywood" tripod. \$350. Smith-Victor light kit w/case. \$225. Call: Alan, (212) 222-3321, NY.

• **FOR SALE:** Salzman animation stand w/mint



Mauer 05 camera. 2 400' mags, automatic rackover, opal glass for transparencies, 9.5" center column w/auto/manual movement, 9x12" compound optical glass, N-S & E-W peg movement, manual follow focus & shutter control. Very solid, perfect set-up for school & beginning animators. \$3000 complete. Leo pod body brace w/Eclair NPR mount. \$50. Angenieux 12-120 zoom lens w/Arri mount & Arri C-mount adaptor. Perfect condition. \$900. Honeywell 1" meter. \$90. Contact: Anomaly Films, (212) 925-1500, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Arri 16-S w/sync generator, 12-120 zoom 400' mag, battery, tripod, changing bag, 2 motors, cases, many extras. \$8500 value, asking \$3200. Contact: Jim Hubbard, (212) 925-4514, NY. (Please note that the phone number for this notice was printed incorrectly in the Jan/Feb issue.)

● **FOR SALE:** Moviola M86 flatbed editor, flicker-free prism, low wow & flutter, quick stop circuit, torque motor box. 3 yrs. old, excellent condition. Fair price. Contact: Ron, (617) 354-6054, MA.

● **FOR SALE:** 6-plate Steenbeck; old but good, rebuilt w/additional amplifier & speaker: \$6000 or best offer. Call: (212) 765-8860, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Bolex H-16 camera, Wollensak 25mm-1.9 lens, Solgar 17mm wide-angle 2.7 lens, Kodak Astigmatic 2.7-102mm lens, \$300. Pan Cinor Berthiot VarioSwitar 17-85mm zoom w/viewfinder, \$700. Bolex 16mm Matte Box, \$125. Bolex 16mm motor w/battery box at different speeds, for hand crank, \$60. A S-8 synchronizer, \$125. Hahnel S-8 splicer, \$35. Call: (212) 677-2181/924-2254, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm upright Moviola. Excellent condition; takes single spliced film. 1 picture head; 2 sound heads. Save on flatbed rentals; it will pay for itself. Call: (212) 666-6787, leave message, NY

● **FOR RENT:** Complete broadcast-quality production pkg. Includes Ikegami HL-83, 3/4" JVC 4700U, color Videotek monitor, wave-form, mikes, lights & tripod. Production personnel also available. Competitive rates. Contact: Everglade Prods., (212) 925-1247, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Ikegami HL-79A, BVU 110, lights, mikes, insurance. \$450/day. Radio mikes, car, sun-guns, crew additional as required. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Tektronix waveform monitor. \$650. Panasonic NV-9300A. \$900. JVC 4400 portable 3/4". \$1200. Frezzolini battery belts, 6AH. \$125. Sharp 13" monitor receiver \$300. JVC KY 2000. \$2400. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony 366 reel-to-reel 7" tape deck. Quartertrack stereo, 3 heads, new belts, rollers, playback head, edit feature. Nagra compatible. Best offer. Call: (212) 548-2875 evenings 6-10 pm, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** New Sony M-3 camera w/ 3 tubes; BVU 110 or 4800 deck; batteries, monitor, tripod, mikes & Lowell lighting. Very portable. Reasonable rates for equipment & cameraperson; crew as needed. Contact: Alan, (212) 222-3321; Caryn, (212) 222-6748, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** 16mm M77 Moviola flatbed, 35BL & 16SR. Also, 35Bl for sale. Contact: Film Friends, (212) 929-7728, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** State-of-the-art 16mm film equipment at incredibly low rates. Call: (212) 222-6699, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm hot splicer, Mauer-Hancock model 816. \$425. Contact: Michael, (212) 843-8886, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Location video package w/Sony DXC-M3 camera/VO-4800. O'Connor/Lisan tripod, Sennheir & Sony mikes, Lowel lights, audio mixer, portable color monitor. \$30/hr. w/technician. Contact: Young Filmmakers/Video Arts, (212) 673-9361, NY.

## Conferences • Workshops

● **VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP SUMMER INSTITUTE 1984:** June 25-Aug. 3. Seminars, critiques & workshops in photography, printing, book arts & video. Enrollment limited to 12 in most courses; tuition \$185/1 wk., \$285/2 wks. Program brochure available; college credit. Contact: Brian Kirkey, Summer Institute VSW, 31 Prince St., Rochester NY 14607, (716) 442-8676.

● **NATIONAL FEDERATION OF LOCAL CABLE PROGRAMMERS ANNUAL CONVENTION:** July 19-21 at Sheraton Hotel in Denver Tech Center. Theme is Community Programming: Managing the Hidden Resources; panels & workshops will examine opportunities & problems surrounding community involvement in cable TVC industry. Over 50 classroom sessions on subjects pertinent to access users, local origination programmers, independent producers, labor unions, community/human service organizations & the arts include Access & Management Options, Copyright & Contract Issues, Minority Access, Audience Measurement & Development. Public invited to register. Contact: Convention Coordinator, Professional Meeting Management, 116 N. College Av., Ste. 2, Fort Collins CO 80524, (303) 484-6300.

● **VIDEO, FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS:** Series of 1-wk. intensive workshops at Bennington College in video production, filmmaking, slide/tape production & still photography. George Stoney, Richard Kaplan, Sumner Glimcher & Eugene Richards. 2 sessions per subject beginning Aug. 5 & Aug. 12. Free brochure available. Contact: Doug Krause, VF&P Workshops, Bennington College, Bennington VT 05201, (802) 442-5401.

● **WORKSHOPS AT COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA:** Intermediate Filmmaking, May 1-June 14, 7-10:30 pm Mon. & Wed. S-8 equipment provided. Instructor: Alan Berliner. \$125. Weekend Workshops: All \$85. Lighting, Sat. & Sun. May 12 & 13 & Sat. May 19 12-6 pm. Instructor: Mark Daniels. Sound Recording, Sat. & Sun. June 2 & 3, 10-6 pm. Instructor: Helene Kaplan. Optical Printing, Sat. June 9, 10-6 pm & Tues. June 12, 7-10 pm. Instructor: Bill Brand. Editing Techniques, Sat. & Sun. June 16 & 17, 10-6 pm. Instructor: Alan Berliner. Discounts for taking multiple workshops & 10% discounts for Collective members. Call: CLC, (212) 925-3926, NY.

## Editing Facilities

● **BRAINSTORM PRODUCTIONS:** M-77 16mm flatbed Moviola, table, rewinds, rivas & guillotine splicers, 4 gang synchronizer, trim bin, etc. Regular rates: \$35/½ day, \$65/day, \$250/wk., \$750/mo.

(Continued on page 36)



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## IN &amp; OUT OF PRODUCTION

## MARY GUZZY

Diversity is the lifeblood of an expressive medium, and in the works of independent film and videomakers the fabric of existence is explored from many aesthetic angles and points of view. The following recently completed or nearly completed works from AIVF member producers are exemplary and reflect a continued commitment on the part of independents to tackle important issues and explore society, culture and environment in highly personal terms.

## NATIONAL SWEEP

From Lubbock, Texas comes a tale of many ironies in the realization of Desperado Productions' first project, *Murray & Arlene*, a half-hour documentary which tells the story of a transplanted New York Jewish couple's difficult adjustment to life in west Texas. While Murray faced unemployment and isolation in the Sun Belt, his once-passive, dependent wife found herself pursuing a college degree and career as a music teacher. Although handicapped by polio, economic hardship and family pressures, Arlene overcame local prejudice and became a spokesperson for working women and disabled employees. Just as the film was nearing completion, Murray died.

Producers Mary and Ray La Fontaine, who plan to continue making films on "ordinary people of west Texas with unusual stories," encountered little support from their local PBS affiliate. However, KLBK, the local CBS station, took an interest in the project and donated editing facilities and the enthusiastic help of a staff editor, Tim DeSpain, in exchange for first air rights. The film was aired three times in Lubbock, and to the La Fontaines' pleas-

ant surprise, "people loved it." Now this film that corporate funders wouldn't touch has been nominated for a Barbara Jordan's Governor's Award by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and received a national broadcast on April 3rd from—who else?—PBS.

From just below the Aurora Borealis up in the Frozen North comes word from indie Curt Madison of the completion of *Huteetl: Koyukon Memorial Potlatch*, the first video depiction of an Alaskan memorial feast for the dead. Shot in the village of Hughes, Alaska on the Koyukuk River, *Huteetl* captures a tradition that has all but vanished outside the Alaskan interior. Those native Alaskans who organized the ceremony for deceased relatives requested the program as an educational tool for their children. The 55-minute program has been aired on KUAC-TV of Fairbanks and received by nearly 200 villages via the rural Alaskan TV Network (RATNET). *Huteetl* was showcased in Manhattan February 2 at the Museum of the American Indian.

Madison, who directed and edited the piece, reported that *Huteetl* was the first indie project ever edited on the CMX system at the University of Alaska Instructional Television Consortium facility. A \$40,000 grant from the All-Native Regional Board of the Yukon-Koyukuk School District made it all possible.

And, in the deep South, Gayla Jamison's documentary *Enough to Share* received a national PBS broadcast on February 21. *Enough to Share* is a 28-minute portrait of Koinonia Farm, a 1500-acre agricultural collective in south Georgia founded in 1942 by scholar and theologian Clarence Jordan, dedicated to

cooperation and "peace instead of revolution." Residents of Koinonia build their own houses, provide day care, farm and run a mail order candy and fruitcake business. The film was a blue ribbon winner at the American Film Festival and is available from Ideas and Images, Inc., a non-profit educational media corporation in Atlanta.

*Paul Cadmus: Enfant Terrible at 80* is Massachusetts filmmaker David Sutherland's one-hour artist profile on the all-but-forgotten American master Paul Cadmus. Aiming "to make a film about an artist and his work without using narrators and interviewers who would come between the viewers and the subject," Sutherland embarked on an intense collaboration with Cadmus and encouraged the retiring artist to speak on camera with candor about his life. Sutherland began the project with a S-8 "sketch" of the artist at work and at leisure and then shot the final version in 16mm. Among others, Cadmus tells the sensational story of the US Navy's confiscation of his painting *The Fleet's In*, created as part of the WPA Artist's Project in the 1930's. National Geographic cinematographer Joe Seaman shot the film, which was edited by Michael Colonna. It will be screened at the 1984 Sydney Film Festival in June.

Filmmaker Ginny Durrin of Washington, DC reports an "incredible response" from churches, police, schools and grassroots groups to her 19-minute film *Kevin's Story*. The film depicts Kevin Tunell, an 18-year-old who killed a young woman in a head-on crash while driving under the influence of alcohol. Kevin was sentenced by a forward-thinking judge to talk to high school students, parents and teachers for one year about the accident.

Durrin saw a *Washington Post* article about Kevin's sentence and his first speech. She negotiated with his lawyer and probation officer for the rights to Kevin's story and financed the production herself. The film is earning back its expenses and more in distribution, and has been awarded a Cine Golden Eagle. (Durrin received a Golden Eagle for two previous films: *Report from Beirut: Summer of '82* and *Solidarnosc*.) *Kevin's Story* is available from the New Day Films distribution co-op.

## DOCUMENTARY DYNAMOS

With four tapes almost ready for the airwaves, the Documentary Guild of Colrain, MA is coming into its own. WNET/Ch 13 in New York will broadcast one of them, *Will Our Children Thank Us?*, this month.

Producers Maurice Jacobsen, Pam Roberts and Ed Wierzbowski have spent five years on this project which they funded themselves. The 58-minute tape follows the lives of three very different New England anti-nuclear activists. Focusing on the process of social change and its effect on

Courtesy Videomaker



Curt Madison's *Huteetl* is the first video depiction of a native American memorial feast for the dead.



the individual, the piece also chronicles the growth of the anti-nuclear movement. It is narrated by Dr. Benjamin Spock.

Jacobsen reports that the Documentary Guild ended up giving *Will Our Children Thank Us?* to PBS when they were told at the contract stage that PBS could not come up with a previously mentioned \$5,000-10,000 acquisition fee. The producers felt the importance of broadcasting the program went beyond the fee.

The group's other projects have had better luck in the funding game. *Dialogues*, a

posers involved with project are Noah Creshevsky and Alice Eve Cohen.

Cantow is responsible for photography, editing, producing and sound design: "In short, the whole film." Through the interplay of poetic and documentary images and the creative use of sound, she seeks to reveal both "the artist at work and her interpretation of the inner landscape of the man."

From upstate New York, Cambiz Khosravi of Woodstock reports the completion of two video works, *Still Life* and *F.C.G.*

Roberta Cantow



*Purrfection? If This Ain't Heaven*, an experimental work about a man and his cat.

New Mexico, the site of the Ohio Valley Mound cultures, the Golden Gate and Brooklyn Bridges, and beyond.

Scientists have noted that light rays curve at the outer edges of the universe, leading them to theorize that time also bends. Inspired by this idea, Hammer used an extreme wide angle lens and "one frame of film per foot of physical space" to simulate the concept of bent time. The film is accompanied by Pauline Oliveros' original score for voice and accordion, *Rattlesnake Mountain*. *Bent Time* will be featured in a showing of Hammer's recent work at New York City's Millennium Film Workshop in mid-May.

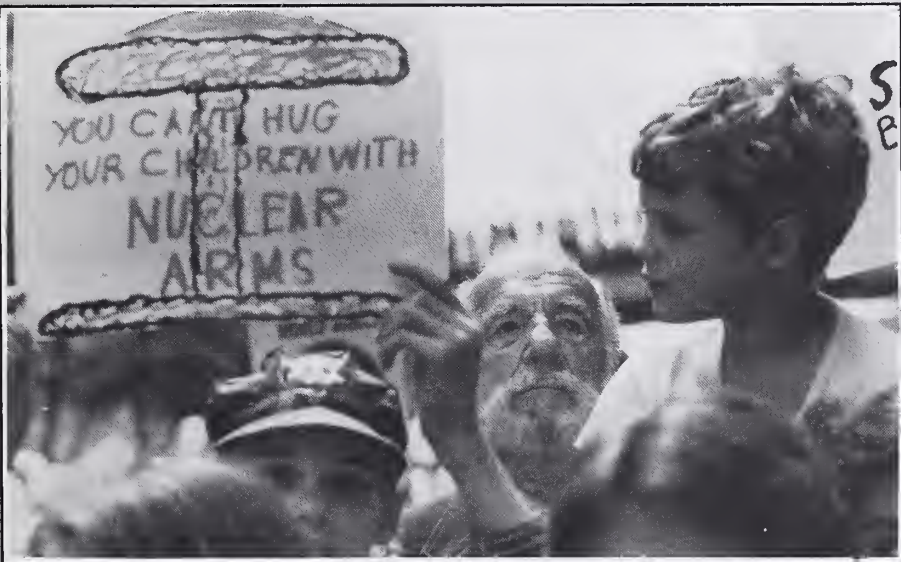
Finally, following up on filmmakers previously noted in this column, Steven Brand's feature documentary *Kaddish* was presented April 3 in the Film Society of Lincoln Center's New Directors/New Films series. And Calgero Salvo (*Juan Felix Sanchez*) premiered his newest work, a one-hour documentary on the Guajiro Indians of Colombia entitled *La Guajiro*, at the San Francisco Art Institute on February 18.

Courtesy Videomaker



Painter Ruth Zack and daughter in Cambiz Khosravi's confrontational *Still Life*.

Lionel J.M. Delevigne



Dr. Benjamin Spock protests war in *Will Our Children Thank Us?*

co-production with Soviet television which examines Soviet-American relations, has received about \$30,000 from individuals and small foundations, including Ploughshares of San Francisco and the Bydale Foundation. The tape will be broadcast in the US and USSR on the same (still to be determined) day. Small grants from the Rockefeller Family Fund have supported *Tennessee Heavy Metal* and *Civil Defense*, two documentaries concerned with safety in the nuclear industry. Both tapes will be completed by early summer.

"We're really persistent," said Jacobsen when asked about the fundraising success of the Documentary Guild. "It's been a long time getting to this point, but we just keep pluggin' along."

#### EXPERIMENTAL INPUT

Difficult to program in the mainstream, but no less vital to the survival and growth of independent media, are experimental works, several of which have been brought to our attention by AIVF members:

Roberta Cantow (*Clotheslines*) has completed *If This Ain't Heaven*, "an intimate and interior portrait of a man and his relationship with a cat." The project was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Women's Project of the Film Fund, the Jerome Foundation and a stipend from Meet the Composer. Com-

*Still Life* begins as a documentary about the late Ruth Zack, a painter, and her daughter in the last months of the artist's life. Originally conceived as a mother-daughter interview and visual survey of Ruth Zack's paintings, the 48-minute tape quickly transmutes into a chilling dialogue between the women revealing the lifelong tensions underlying their relationship and their severely divergent values and concepts of life and death.

Ruth Zack's daughter was so pleased with the results of *Still Life* that she commissioned Khosravi to produce *F.C.G.*, a 39-minute satire which proceeds in a non-linear manner to comment on "the ideological role of TV in selling soap and foreign intervention." By spoofing television advertising clichés, news programs and "Masterpiece Theatre"-type cultural shows, *F.C.G.* ("Freedom, Country, God") attempts to illustrate how television can distort our view of the world and control our understanding of events.

New York City filmmaker Barbara Hammer has completed *Bent Time*, a 22-minute, 16mm color film funded by the Jerome Foundation. *Bent Time* is a one-point perspective visual path across the US beginning inside a linear accelerator—or atom-smashing device—and travelling to such high-energy locations as the home of the ancient sun calendar in Chaco Canyon,



Student/non-profit rates: \$30/½ day, \$50/day, \$180/wk., \$600/mo. Contact: Kit Jones, 220 East 23 St., NY NY 10010, (212) 686-1580.

● **16mm EDITING ROOM** w/6-plate Steenbeck, bins, synchronizer, viewer & splicer. Access: 10 am-6 pm, Mon.-Fri. \$100/wk. Special arrangements for evening & weekend rentals. Contact: R. Geist, Women's Interart Center, (212) 246-1050, NY.

● **SUITE 27:** Broadcast interformat editing at C&C Visual introduces expanded state of the art video post-production. Sony Betacam, BVU 800 & BVH 200 machines; system operated by Sony edit controller. Character generation, CMX-compatible full production switcher, punch tape & hard copy for time-code. On or off-line projects, 1" or ¾" masters, 24 hr., 7-day access. Contact: Christopher Cohen, Ian Greenstein, C&C Visual, Ltd., 12 West 27 St., NY NY 10001, (212) 684-3837.

● **FOR RENT:** Editing room w/16mm 6-plate flickerless Moviola. In-house rental only; 16-hr. access; upper West Side location. \$25/day, \$150/wk., \$500/mo. Call: Rondo Productions, (212) 496-7244, NY.

● **TWO COMPLETE EDITING ROOMS** in Chelsea: (a) 24hr. access: Moviola flatbed w/torque motor box; complete 16mm edit equipment; complete kitchen & bathroom; minimal office facilities; telephone; air conditioning. (b) 10am-6pm access: Steenbeck; complete 16mm edit equipment; ltd. kitchen, bath facilities; specialized edit equipment available at extra cost. Contact: David Loucka, Lance Bird, (212) 584-7530, NY.

● **EDITING & POST-PRODUCTION FACILITIES AVAILABLE:** Short-term rentals only. 9am-5pm business days. KEM 8-plate 16/35mm, ¾" editing, sound transfer, narration recording, extensive sound effects library, interlock screening. Contact: Cinetudes Film Productions, 295 West 4 St., NY NY 10014; (212) 966-4600.

● **BRODSKY & TREADWAY S-8 & 8MM FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER MASTERS:** Scene-by-scene density & total color correction, variable speed & freeze frame, sound from any source. Artists & broadcasters like our work. By appointment only. Call: (617) 666-3372, MA.



To all independent video & film folk who send materials to "In & Out of Production": If you have striking b/w production stills from your project, preferably in vertical format with good contrast, send them along with the written copy to Mary Guzy, Notices Editor. Please indicate whether or not you wish the photo returned & label the still with title, director, actors, situation, return address & phone number. Let's have a full-page photo spread of recent independent work!!

● **STEENBECKS FOR RENT:** Moderately priced by the month. Delivered to your workspace. Prompt repairs included. Call: Paul, (212) 316-2913, NY.

● **LARGE COMFORTABLE EDITING ROOM** w/KEM 8-plate Universal editing table, 16mm & 35mm, rewinds, bins, splicers, synchronizers, etc., private phone, additional office space available. Midtown location. Call: Errol Morris Films, 1697 Broadway, NY NY 10019, (212) 757-7478/582-4045.

● **SONY TYPE V EDITING EQUIPMENT:** Excellent hourly rate if you use average 10 or more hrs. editing time per month. Contact: Michael Schwartz, (212) 925-7771/966-6009, NY.

● **REGULAR & S-8 FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER:** Professional quality, industrial or broadcast; much better than you've seen before. Supervised or unsupervised; reasonable rates. Contact: Landy, 400 East 83 St. #4A, NY NY 10028; (212) 734-1402.

● **SONY BVU ¾" EDITING:** \$25 hr. w/editor. Call: (212) 242-2320, NY.

● **EDITOR OF ACADEMY AWARD-nominated** documentary now cuts ¾" video off-line. JVC decks w/FM dub, Cezar IVC microprocessor controller, special effects keyer & colorizer, fade to black, waveform & pulse cross monitor, B&W graphics camera w/animation stand & titling system, mics, turntable, audio cassette, VHS time code burn in. \$25/hr. for projects under \$3500. Contact: Bruce Ettinger, (212) 226-8489, NY.

● **SELF-SERVICE EDITING:** ¾" JVC Tapehandlers, RM-88U editor, free instruction. \$20/hr. Transfers, dubs, etc. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **SUNNY, ATTRACTIVE, FURNISHED OR UNFURNISHED OFFICES** w/private entrances near West Village. 1 & 2 room suites. Conference/screening room & office equipment available to share. Very high floor, panoramic views, small terraces, air-conditioning, excellent security. 24-hr. building. \$550/mo. single, \$850 mo. double. Short or long term sublet. Contact: David Greaves, (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **LARGE EDIT ROOM** w/6-plate Steenbeck, windows, carpet, phone, access to video deck, copy machine, etc. Contact: Bob McBride, Earthrise, 330 West 42 St., NY NY 10036, (212) 594-6967.

● **FOR RENT:** Moviola M-77's. \$500/mo. in your workspace. 15% discount to AIVF members. Contact: Philmaster Productions, (212) 873-4470, NY.

● **VIDEO EDITING & TIME CODING:** ¾" hi-speed video editing on new JVC 8250 w/convergence control. \$20/30 per hour. Low rates for time coding & time code editing. Call: Inpoint Production, (212) 679-3172, NY.

● **TIME CODE EDITING:** ¾", VHS, Beta I w/fast search. Time code & control track editing in our Video Fine Edit Room. W/technician: \$30/35 hr. Contact: Young Filmmakers/Video Arts, (212) 673-9361, NY.

● **TIME CODE BURN-IN & STRIPING:** ¾" VHS, Beta I. Burn-in: \$20/hr. Striping: \$15/hr. Contact: Young Filmmakers/Video Arts, (212) 673-9361, NY.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

● **NEW DAY FILMS**, 10-yr., award-winning national distribution cooperative of social issue films seeks excellent films & filmmakers seriously committed to distribution. Information & application form available. May deadline. Contact: Joanne Grant, 30 East 9 St., NY NY 10003.

● **FRANCE'S NEW NATIONAL SCIENCE MUSEUM SEEKS INDEPENDENT SCIENCE FILMS:** Parc de La Villette, scheduled to open in Paris to public in 1986, seeks American independent 16mm films/tapes of non-commercial nature in fields of natural & environmental science, transportation, energy, agriculture, animal life, industry, etc. Not needed at this time are films of ethnological, sociological, educational or psychological interest. Contact: Emma Cohn, 2827 Valentine Av., Bronx NY 10458.

● **FOX/LORBER ASSOCIATES**, specialists in TV marketing & distribution, expanding feature film library for representation. Interested in full-length English language films w/primarily narrative structure for sale to pay TV/cable, broadcast & home video, both domestic & foreign. Minimum length: 60 min.; no subtitles. Contact: Ericka Markman, Fox/Lorber Assocs., 79 Madison Av., #601, NY NY 10016; (212) 686-6777.

● **PELICAN FILMS** seeks films/tapes for distribution to holistic health movement. We offer alternative to traditional non-theatrical distribution. Contact: Arthur Hoyle, 3010 Santa Monica Blvd., #440, Santa Monica, CA 90404; (213) 399-3753.

● **DISTRIBUTOR** of 16mm environmental issue films looking for new titles for developing catalogue. Contact: Umbrella Films, 60 Blake Rd., Brookline MA 02146, (617) 277-6639.

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## Freelancers

● **PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT** offers assistance w/audience development, publicity campaigns, developing marketing & promotional materials. Contact: Kristen Simone, (212) 289-8299, NY.

● **SOUNDWOMAN AVAILABLE** w/equipment to work as recordist or boom operator. Speaks Spanish. Negotiable rates. Contact: Lisa Schnall, (212) 499-3679, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/16mm Aaton & lights available to work w/independents on doc & narrative films. Negotiable rates. Contact: East Marion Films, (212) 420-0335, NY.

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George Stoney, NY NY  
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● **GAFFER** w/lights pkg. 2K, D-lights, totalights, hair-lights, stands, umbrellas, grip arms, etc. \$15/day. Contact: Alan Steinheimer, (212) 222-3321, NY.

● **CAMERAMAN AVAILABLE** w/own 16SR, 35BL & Icky. Some French & Spanish, extensive travel in Caribbean. Call: Mik Cribben, (212) 929-7728, NY.

● **CAMERA OPERATOR/ASSISTANT** w/ACL & 12-120mm. Contact: Denise Brassard, (212) 925-2531, NY.

● **16mm EDITOR AVAILABLE**: NYU-trained w/references & short reel. Willing to work for little money; will consider working for screen credit. Interest in any/all phases of post-production. Also available as consultant for video editing. Call: April, (201) 743-7345, NJ.

● **CAMERA ASSISTANT** w/Aaton 7 LTR for hire. Lighting & grip package available. Contact: John, (914) 473-0633, NY.

● **RESEARCHER**: Access & familiarity w/all NYC libraries & Library of Congress in DC. Efficient & meticulous w/background in history, political economy & filmmaking. Rate negotiable. Contact: Danny, (212) 924-4711, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** w/Arri 16SR, fast lenses & lights. Fluent in French, Spanish. Negotiable rates. Contact: Pedro Bonilla, (212) 662-1913, NY.

● **NEWS CREW AVAILABLE** w/16mm & ¾"

production gear. Professional credits on request. Contact: Pacific St. Films, 630 Ninth Av., NY NY 10036, (212) 875-9722.

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● **INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO MAKERS GUIDE** by Michael Wiese. Expanded 1984 edition of *Independent Filmmakers Guide*, contains new sections on pay TV buyers, film & video distributors, music videos, successful presentation techniques & basic info on financing, production & distribution of film & video. 400 pp., \$14.95. Contact: M. Wiese, PO Box 406, Westport CT 06881.

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## Coming Attractions

- AFI: Rocky Adolescence
- Theatrical Sensibility on Video
- Books, Books, Books
- Business Report: The American Film Market
- In Focus: The Betacam/Panasonic Shoot-off

## In upcoming issues of THE INDEPENDENT

cians in film/video production, photography, catering & artist development. Current clients include Lenslight Assoc. (music video producers) & Rocks Off (club & record membership card network). Contact: The Collective, 153 West 27 St., Ste. 1201, NY NY 10001, (212) 206-0480.

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## Trims • Glitches

● **CONGRATULATIONS TO MIDWEST AIVF MEMBERS** awarded 1984 Regional Fellowships in film & video production: Andrea Gomez of Ferndale MI received \$4500 for *The Enchanted Horse*, Laura Kipnis of Chicago was awarded \$2000 for *Ecstasy Unlimited* & Loretta Smith, also of Chicago, received \$5000 for *Flower of the Dragon*. Grants will be administered by Center for New Television of Chicago.

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to Jon Alpert of Downtown Community TV, awarded a 1983 Alfred I. DuPont/Columbia University journalism award for *American Survival*, produced in association w/NBC News. Also receiving the DuPont/Columbia award were Meg Switzgale & WGBH-TV, Boston for *In Our Water*, presented on the PBS "Frontline" series.

● **CORRECTION:** Last month's "Input" article by Wanda Bershen contained two editorial errors. The first sentence in the second paragraph should have started, "In 1977..." The second line on p. 14 should have referred to "a good 30% of the average 20 hours of American programming."



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Linda Reisman  
*Personal Film / Feminist Film*  
*Interview with Marjorie Keller*  
Luli McCarroll  
*Dissecting The Body Human: The Sexes (CBS)*

Reviews of Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*,  
Pollock's *Mary Cassatt*; Report on the UCLA  
Gay and Lesbian Media Conference;  
Women Filmmakers in West Germany (part 2).

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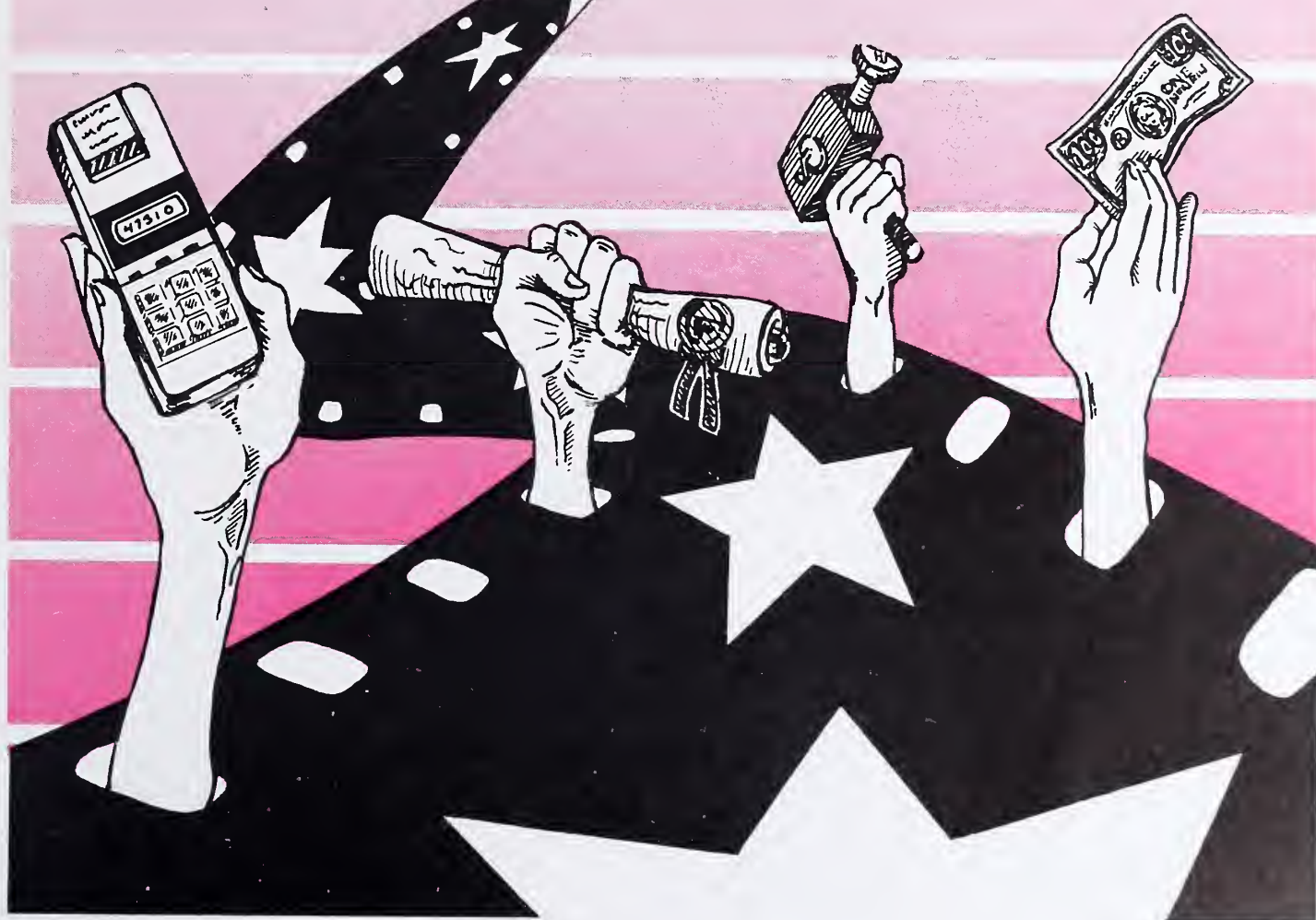


# INDEPENDENT

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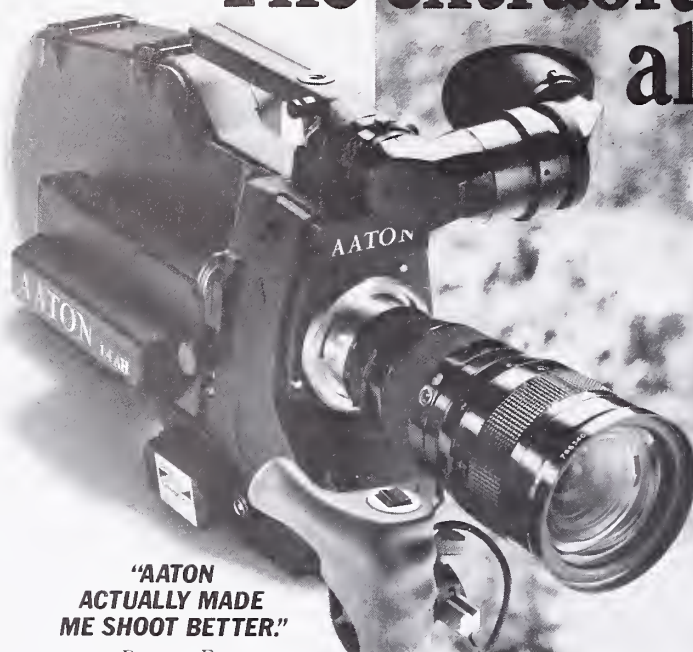
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# THE INDEPENDENT

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**COVER:** Is AFI becoming anything more than a caricature of its own logo? It has a large new campus for training filmmakers, funnels production money from the NEA to filmmakers, does exhibition tours, publishes AMERICAN FILM, does preservation, and has a special women directors workshop and a new Video Center—all under a mandate to foster film art and coordinate national services to the field. Debra Goldman's article explores AFI's priorities and the impact of its heavy campus debt. Illustration and concept by David Keller.

## ERRATA

We would like to clarify the use of the words "net" and "gross" in the article on distribution pick-ups "The Theatrical Track from Courtship to Contract" (April, 1984 *Independent*). On page 19 we say, "The standard money deal is a 50-50 or a 60-40 split on the gross after costs. . . ." In fact, the word "gross" seems to be used quite lightly in the business. "Gross after costs," for example, is technically the definition for "net." In Robert I. Freedman's article "Square Deal: Choosing a Distributor" (December, 1982 *Independent*) he points out the following—and very sound—resolution to the legalese maze: "The second most material provision is compensation, or in contract language, the consideration for the grant of rights. Again, specificity is vital. . . . Where payment is a percentage of something, the definitions could be more important than the size of the percentage. Words such as 'income' and 'net' have very little meaning without a definition. There are almost as many definitions as there are contracts. Words such as 'producer's gross' or 'distribu-

tor's net' are particularly ambiguous and without concise definitions." —RT

*The Independent welcomes letters to the editors. Send them to FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York NY 10012. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.*

### CPB New Minority Funds Available

Public telecommunications organizations are invited by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to submit proposals for Native American, Asian or Pacific Islander minority programming consortia. Financial support is available from CPB under its Minority Consortia Policy to assist organizations in co-production, acquisition and distribution of minority programs for public radio and television. Proposal deadline: July 16, 1984. Guidelines and further information are available. Contact: Lourdes Santiago, Department of Human Resources, CPB, 1111 Sixteenth St., NW, Washington DC 20036, (202) 955-5308.



## Media Clips

# CPB Turnaround Nixes Indie Agreement

Renee Tajima

The good news is that the recently-formed National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcast Producers and CPB representatives reached an unprecedented agreement on major issues on March 16. [The coalition is a direct successor to IPAB—see *The Independent*, April 1984.] The bad news is that CPB's Board of Directors then substantially rejected the agreement—putting independents almost back to square one.

The original agreement included the following points:

1) As of fiscal year 1985, no work produced for *Frontline* would be considered "independent production," since editorial control for the series rests with its station rather than with individual producers. Funds distributed to *Frontline* under the rubric of independent production would not be retroactively reimbursed, but they would be replaced in the future by substantial amounts from the Open Solicitation fund or an equivalent.

2) The majority of panelists on every funding panel would be selected from a pool of panelists mutually approved by CPB and independent representatives. In addition, CPB agreed to develop a mechanism by which panelists would be able to review proposals rejected by staff.

3) A project can be considered a "minority production" only when it is created by minority producers, not simply when it concerns minority subjects. At least two of the three key positions (writer, producer, director) on the project must be held by minorities for the production to qualify.

4) Sixty percent of an anticipated supplemental 1984 PBS appropriation—equalling approximately \$1.5 million—would be earmarked for a special round of independent productions to be chosen through the Open Solicitation process.

As a result of the agreement, the Coalition agreed not to seek new legislation at the March Congressional hearings. The Coalition's members returned to their home constituencies with news of the indie success.

But one week after the March 16 meeting—on what may be known hereafter as Black Friday—AIVF executive director Lawrence Sapadin received an urgent call from CPB counsel Paul Symczak: the CPB Board had nixed major portions of the agreement, especially the provisions regarding the panel process and the one-time set-aside of funds for independent production. According to a follow-up letter from Program Fund director Ron Hull stating the Board's position:

1) CPB will develop a pool of panelists approved by indie producers but will not promise that a majority of each panel will be culled from that pool. CPB will consider ways to permit panelists to review proposals rejected by staff.

2) CPB reaffirms its commitment to supporting minority productions and producers but rejects any set-aside of specific amounts for minority production.

3) CPB will allocate a "substantial amount" of any FY '84 supplemental appropriation, if received, to independents, but refuses to earmark a specific amount.

4) CPB recognizes that *Frontline* does not meet the criteria of independent production.

Euphoria quickly turned to anger. In response to the Board's action, the Coalition revamped its strategy for the upcoming Congressional hearings. At the following Monday's Senate hearings, Sapadin and West Coast representative Loni Ding requested legislative action to help independent producers.

What lay behind the Board's action? "The timing of the Board's rejection was such that people outside of the whole process could easily conclude that the whole thing was a set-up," said Sapadin. "But I think the staff—at least Symczak and Hull—acted in good faith. I think it was a colossal mishandling of their own Board."

The upcoming CPB reauthorization vote in

Congress is not the end of the ride for the Coalition. CPB did agree to meet with indies three times per year, and indie concerns will thus be talked out on a periodic basis. But if the present impasse continues, indies may also call for oversight hearings in Congress. The Coalition's parting message to Washington was, "We'll be back."

## Highwater Accused of Fraud

It would seem that Native Americans, whose images have been massacred for years on the screen, would find some remedy on public television. But their presence on the public airwaves has been minimal, with the exception of efforts by the Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium and struggling independent producers scattered throughout the country.

Given this, it's no small wonder that the CPB-funded program *The Primal Mind*, which aired on PBS on April 18, has stirred up a strong reaction from several leading Native American groups. At the center of the controversy is the enigmatic Jamake Highwater, its host and writer, and co-owner of The Primal Mind Foundation, which produced the program. The charge from Highwater's critics: his claim of Indian ancestry is a fraud, and the fraud is manifested in the very content and perspective of *The Primal Mind*.

On April 19, one day after the broadcast, the Survival of American Indians Association (SAIA), an Olympia, Washington-based group, asked the United States Attorney General's office to investigate "the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's multi-million dollar support for individuals who fraudulently represent themselves as Indian in order to profit from submitting broadcast grants which are categorized as minority submissions with appropriate minority representation." The group's specific focus is Highwater, who has also been promised a \$600,000 matching grant to produce a six-part series *Native Land: Saga of the Indian Americas*. SAIA submitted photographic and written documentation which it hopes will prove its claims, and cited support from the National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Youth Council, and even the Blackfeet tribe—which Highwater has identified as his own.

(When questioned on April 20 about the investigation, Highwater, his attorney Jonathan Lubell, and CPB had not yet seen the investigation request nor the documentation, and would not respond directly to it.)

Highwater's track record is impressive: he has written more than 10 books on Indian culture, has been featured on Bill Moyers' show *Six Great Western Ideas* and has been active on the lecture circuit. Highwater first achieved acclaim as a writer, arts critic, theater director and choreographer under the name J. Marks.

According to SAIA's director Hank Adams, a former task force chairman of the Congressional American Indian Policy Review Commission, the questions regarding Highwater's identity began to surface several years ago when



Jamake Highwater and *The Primal Mind*, an identity crisis on PBS?

Courtesy Primal Mind Foundation



he became visible as an Indian "expert and scholar." Vine Deloria Jr., the author of *Custer Died for Your Sins* and *Behind the Trail of Broken Tears*, was one of the first to bring him to the attention of Indian groups and the press. As a result Adams, a long-time investigator of Indian claims, and columnist Jack Anderson researched Highwater's background. In February of this year, Anderson published two columns which alleged that Highwater lied about his age, educational experience and family background.

Highwater's response to the allegations is that they are "simply not true." Immediately after Anderson's columns were published, Lubell drew up a 21-point rebuttal. Lubell regards the accumulated charges as a personal attack on Highwater and asserts, "It's nonsense. A person's work is to be judged on the value of the work itself."

But the work does, in fact, seem to be in dispute. The show's executive producer, Alvin H. Perlmutter, says, "*The Primal Mind* opens windows into the minds and culture of Native Americans in a way we have not experienced before." But Adams criticizes the television program and Highwater's previous book upon which it is based, claiming that "virtually nothing is drawn from Indian sources. He becomes the Indian person who affirms or validates the conclusions and assertions of non-Indian theoreticians." However, Adams admits that there is probably no strong consensus on *The Primal Mind* in the Native American community. For instance, the leading Mohawk publication *Akwesasne Notes* has reviewed Highwater's work favorably.

In subsequent months, more information as to Highwater's background may come to light. Given the scarcity of material by and about Native Americans on the screen, each program is all the more significant and subject to scrutiny. *The Primal Mind* should be no exception, and we hope to follow the controversy closely as the truth unfolds.

—RT

## Chicano-Mexican Connection Grows

El Nuevo Cine Latino Americano—the New Latin American Cinema movement—has sprung from theory into practice in the Southwest. Chicano filmmakers are beginning to tie into the Mexican film community with cooperative production efforts. *El Norte* is the most visible example—director Greg Nava shot on location in Mexico and picked up part of his crew there. But the trans-border interaction has been percolating for years and may signal an important new potential for minority filmmaking.

"We consider Chicano cinema a part of the international movement in Latin American cinema, with the Chileans, Mexicans and Cubans, for example," explained Jesus Trevino, a Los Angeles-based independent producer. "Chicanos sprang from the same social, economic and cultural milieu." Latino media artists have begun to develop ties with the "homeland," as have many of their Asian and Black counterparts (as evidenced by the Black Filmmaker



Chicano filmmaker Jesus Trevino shot his first feature, *Raices de Sangre*, in Mexico with help from the Echeverria government.

Foundation's African tour, the annual Asian American International Film Festival and the pan-African/diaspora film series sponsored by the Black Film Institute, Third World Newsreel and others). According to Trevino, a loose network of Chicano-Mexican filmmakers similarly developed through events like the Chicano cinema retrospectives at the first Havana Film Festival and the Benalmadena Film Festival in Spain.

On a more periodic basis, the San Antonio CineFestival programs the works of both Chicano and Mexican filmmakers (see article in festival section). For example, Bay-area filmmaker Lourdes Portillo, one of the few Chicana filmmakers, met Marcela Fernandez Violante, one of the few Mexican women filmmakers, at CineFestival. "We found we had similar interests in terms of feminism, politics, the family. . . we're both Mexicans," said Portillo. "We developed a great interest in working together."

Actual production ties between Mexican and Chicano filmmakers were briefly fostered by the former Echeverria government in Mexico. In 1974, the then-President called on Mexican producers to turn from the *churros* B-movie form and to focus on building a nationalized and socially-oriented film industry. Echeverria also made overtures to Chicano filmmakers in an effort to develop a greater awareness of the Chicano experience for Mexican audiences. As a result, Trevino was able to produce his first feature, *Raices de Sangre* (*Roots of Blood*) with financing from the Mexican government's Corporacion Nacional Cinematografica. The film depicts the unionization struggle of Mexican and Chicano workers in a border town.

But the subsequent Portillo administration balked at government financing, and de-emphasized Echeverria's ideals in favor of private enterprise. One result of Portillo's austerity program is the radical devaluation of the peso—which may be devastating the Mexican

economy but is a boost to American buyers of labor and products. "As a result, it's an interesting place for independents to look to," said Carlos Penichet, who with his brother Jeff runs Bilingual Education Services, an independent film production and distribution company based in Los Angeles. "There are a lot of different ways to produce in Mexico; there would be different pay scales for a major US studio production than for a low-budget independent."

The possible arrangements an independent can work with are: 1) to co-produce with the state-owned Instituto de Cine Mexicano or Direccion de Radio, Television y Cinematografia; 2) to work with the film workers' co-operatives, in which union members form production units and defer salary or labor for an equity position; and 3) work with an independent production company which can offer staff, crew and connections.

Trevino pointed out that, for Chicanos looking towards Mexico for location work, the possibilities are still in the exploratory stage. "There are different factors—the budget, the nature of the film, the extent of US and Mexican involvement. We're still in the process of working out these formulas." The Penichets are in negotiations to produce a feature comedy, *Tepito II*. Trevino and his partner Luis Ruiz are now producing two documentaries: *Mexico: The Future*, a White Paper-type overview of Mexico internally, and *Neighbors*, which explores Mexico's interface with the US. They are shooting on location in both countries and have obtained Mexican assistance with crews and coordination.

These initiatives do not yet form a deluge. But in viewing a segment on the Guatemala-Mexico conflict from *Mexico: The Future*, I was impressed with the sensitivity and in-depth knowledge with which these Chicano filmmakers approached the subject of Mexico, especially in their depiction of sanctuary given to Guatemalan refugees by Mexican villagers. And I was



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Haydee Hinojosa as Consuelo in the film *Consuelo: Quiénes Somos?/Who Are We?*

intrigued by the potential for media on Latin America from a Latino perspective—an especially important perspective for American audiences during these times of heightened conflict in the Southern hemisphere.

—Renee Tajima

## Spain's New Film Policy

*Although the US film industry claims to be a free market operation, it lobbies for, and obtains, all kinds of legislation to help itself. But those working on the fringes of the industry haven't been so successful in bending the law to their needs. These days, as the old Hollywood remolds itself and exhibition is upended by video and satellite technologies reshaping the marketplace, there's talk of new sorts of incentives and protections that will affect more than the biggies. It's in the interest of independent producers to watch developments in other countries which favor small productions, so we'll be aware of useful precedents and models when our turn comes.*

—Ed.

Spain's sweeping new film reform bill—Real Decreto sobre Protección a la Cinematografía Española—will greatly alter all sectors of its film industry. In particular, the legislation promises to stimulate and streamline the production and distribution of shorts and features by younger and more experimental filmmakers. The bill has been approved by the Socialist majority and is expected to become law by early summer.

The decree is the result of many months of discussion between the Asociación de Producción Cinematográfica (APC), representing 80 percent of all Spanish productions, and the Dirección General de Cinematografía, the Motion Picture Division of the Ministry of Culture. The objectives? To put the Spanish film industry on a firm economic footing by increasing financial incentives for investment in production, changing the pattern of film distribution to favor Spanish language and subtitled films over dubbed imports, and encouraging, by means of government subsidies and prizes, the entry of new filmmakers and projects of "special quality."

In a country where feature budgets fall in the \$100,000-500,000 range, government advances of credit up to 50 percent of production costs and bonuses for quality projects can carry a lot

of weight. According to established formula, films budgeted over \$350,000 and/or with special artistic merit will also be eligible to receive funding pegged to the level of box office gross after release. The production of short films (under 60 minutes) will also profit from government assistance under a similar system.

But the most controversial changes are in policies affecting distribution and exhibition. In a move that Spanish producer Luis Megino, a director of the APC, hailed as "a return to freedom of choice for the Spanish viewing public" and which the Motion Picture Export Association branded as an unfair infringement of free market practices, the Ministry of Culture opted for regulations which tie issuance of dubbing licenses directly to the successful distribution of Spanish films. Thus, whereas Spain is currently saturated with Hollywood fare dubbed into Spanish (blockbusters as well as films which flopped miserably in their US tryouts), the release of dubbed films will henceforth be permitted according to strict formulas based on the box office success of native Spanish films.

The new system needn't worry American independents looking for outlets in Spain. Foreign films shown with original soundtracks and Spanish language subtitles are completely exempt from any restrictions enforced against dubbed films. And Spain remains particularly receptive to screening new American works through the circuits of the cineclubs and festivals like Valladolid, Barcelona, San Sebastian and Bilbao.

The new Spanish law attacks the problem of exhibition in theaters—what one Spanish producer called "the tyranny of real time: only 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to program a movie theater." The regulations explicitly require ex-

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hibitors to play a minimum of one day of Spanish films for every three days of dubbed fare. In the major urban markets of Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao and Saragossa, this ratio is reduced: only two dubs for each Spanish film. Spanish rereleases count for less, while children's films count more. Short films are also affected. Every feature, dubbed or Spanish, must carry a short of at least 10 minutes. And for every foreign short screened, three Spanish shorts must play in the same calendar quarter.

If the equations sound complex, the intent is plain: more screen time for original Spanish product and foreign films shown in original versions. According to the legislation, "Spanish" means any film in Castilian, Catalan, Basque, Gallego or other regional languages which also meet qualifications for Spanish production participation set forth in the legislation. Films from Latin American are extended preferential treatment.

Behind the numbers and the formulas lies the determination of the ruling Socialist party, and a good many Spanish filmmakers, to reverse the economic and political conditions which previously suppressed Spanish production. Like the end of censorship, which followed Franco's death, the end of American cinematic domination will also have profound artistic and cultural repercussions. In the first place, it signals a conscious recognition of the need to regain the integrity of the film medium itself by restoring original voices, a key part of the aesthetic whole. Producer Magino explained, "In most other European countries, the public has the option of seeing a film in a dubbed or subtitled version. In Spain, we have no choice, because in 1944 Franco, in imitation of Mussolini, ordered that all films be shown in Spanish. But as we begin to enrich ourselves culturally, the public demands the true language. We still love American films—good American films. But we look forward to hearing Gary Cooper's real voice." —Lois Fishman

*Lois Fishman is a freelance journalist based in Washington, DC who recently traveled to Spain.*

## Art Com TV

The San Francisco video exhibition venue La Mamelie (run by Carl Loeffler, editor of *Art Com* magazine) has set its sights on a larger audience. According to its organizers, "Art Com Television will deliver to cable viewers in eight major markets the best of television art and creative investigation into the applications of new technologies." The Art Com series is still in the research stage and a pilot is currently in development. The preliminary launch date is scheduled for the fall of 1984 on as-yet unspecified pay cable services. According to Anna Couey, Art Com's business manager, the programming will vary, and will include a mixed bag of video art, performance and music video. Open submissions are now being accepted on ¾" cassettes (include return postage). Contact: Carl Loeffler, Executive Director, Art Com Television, POB 3123 Rincon Annex, San Francisco, CA 94119; (415) 431-7524. —RT■

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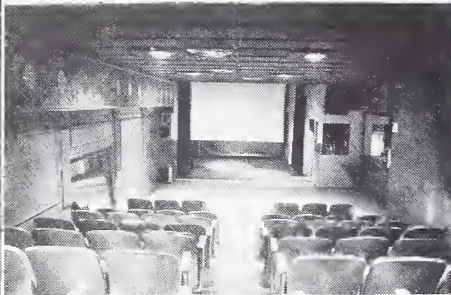
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# From Business Tips to Film Care

## **The Movie Business Book**

Edited by Jason E. Squire. Englewood Cliffs:  
Prentice-Hall, 1983, \$13.95.

Reading *The Movie Business Book* on a recent trip to Los Angeles had to be the most embarrassing assignment I've ever had. I mean, tooling around Rodeo Drive and trying to hide that cover with the flashy five-color stars and reels in my glove compartment. (All of you who read *Photoplay* will know what I mean.) *The Movie Business Book* may look like a Hollywood how-to rag but it is actually a solid, practical and yes, authoritative guide to the industry on everything from creation to book publishing rights to foreign tax incentives.

*The Book* is an anthology of insider essays written by 42 working professionals. While they speak almost exclusively from a Hollywood perspective, these experts provide insightful information which independents can extrapolate to size. *The Book* is intelligently organized into 11 sections for quick reference. You might call it a nice package. No essay in *The Book* is over 15 pages long and it's all well-written (but then again, my first choice on the Literary Guild list is *In Search of Excellence*). Mel Brooks' piece "My Movies: The Collision of Art and Money" is a notable exception.

The anthology offers several chapters which may be of interest to independent producers. *The Book* begins with "The Creators"—one of its least special aspects. There are any number of other treatments on the market of how people like producer Robert Evans and director Sydney Pollack—two of this section's contributors—work and think, and these essays are none too revealing. One of the two independent filmmakers represented in the entire book, Joan Micklin Silver, follows with a description of the making of *Hester Street*. She devotes a few paragraphs to the trials and tribulations of women directors and then states, "Happily, I'm married to somebody who wanted to help me overcome them," which isn't much inspiration for those of us who don't have land developers in the family. The other independent here, who may be more aptly defined by purists as "a low-budget producer," is Russ Meyer (*Vixen*, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, *Super Vixen* and *Beneath the Valley of the Ultra Vixens*).

*The Book* really gets down to business with "The Property." The section begins with a piece by star screenwriter William Goldman who contributes an example of his screenplay style—a

three-page run-on sentence which comprises the ending to *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*—which negates all previous how-to-write-a-screenplay texts. But the best stuff is the selling/buying process for a screenplay as described by two literary agents and a Lorimar story editor. These nuts-and-bolts analyses on securing and contracting with agents, the breakdown of various publishing rights and bottom-line percentages characterize *The Book's* subsequent and very meaty sections on business.

In "The Money," the late attorney Norman Garey offers an overview of feature film financing and packaging from the viewpoint of an "entrepreneurial producer." Studio financing is one route, but Garey also deals with alternatives such as selling off territorial rights, limited partnerships, completion guarantees and negative pick-ups. Essays on foreign tax incentives and financing and foreign distribution follow. Foreign countries have been particularly attractive to independents both because of their aesthetic receptivity and the tax shelters some nations offer (the US government terminated ours in 1976). Production-wise, attorney Gary Conoff describes the government-sponsored financial inducements to producers who make films in Canada, England and Germany, the three major sources of tax incentives and subsidies. On the distribution end of the foreign connection, Sylvie Schneble and Tristine Rainer outline alternative approaches to overseas handling by the majors. These alternatives are sketched in convenient point-by-point sections, ranging from the mini-majors such as Orion and New World to brokerage services and agents.

Clout is the byword for effective marketing and dissemination of product in both domestic and foreign markets, as indicated in "The Distributors." In this aspect of the business, the independent producer may be at the greatest disadvantage. Distribution is further and further removed from the moments of creation, and an adequately capitalized organization and consistency matter the most. Perhaps the most useful essay here is Raphael Silver's description of the selling of *Hester Street*. He discusses the critical positioning of *Hester Street* as a vehicle of broad interest rather than a "small" Jewish film, as well as practical cautions on leveraging decent exhibition deals and compliance from a small independent distributor.

In "The Exhibitors," we get to hear the other side of the story, as theater owners bemoan the high costs of maintaining a screen. Richard May of Twentieth Century-Fox provides a sample ex-





Have it delivered to you in a brown paper wrapper but be sure to read *The Movie Business Book* if you're going for the big one.

hibition contract, and there is even an analysis of popcorn and concessions sales. Independents may want to pay close attention to the short essay by Robert Laemmle, an independent exhibitor and co-owner of Laemmle Fine Arts Theatres in Los Angeles, which are likely venues for their films.

Those of you who don't curl up to light reading with *Fortune*, as I do, may find *The Movie Business Book* somewhat intimidating or boring, with all its talk of guild contacts, options and percentages after grosses. But with independence comes the absence of the various support structures and people which a studio-based producer can depend on. *Sans* the benefit of a business affairs office, high-priced lawyers, *et.al.*, the independent should at least be familiar with the various concerns which will undoubtedly arise when dealing with the theatrical film world. *The Movie Business Book* is a good primer and a good overview which won't get you bogged down in too many details. As Mel Brooks concludes his essay on the business of producing and directing, "What's the toughest thing about making films? Putting in the little holes."  
—Renee Tajima

## Talking Back

Edited by Michael Singen. San Francisco: The Public Media Center, 1983, \$12.

When President Reagan interceded during the latest tussle between Hollywood and the networks (a.k.a. the Wingtips vs. the Guccis) over the financial interest and syndication rules, it was hard to tell who was running the nominally independent FCC. When the Commission's chairman, Mark Fowler, occasionally runs afoul of the prez it is because he is, if anything, ideologically in line with Administration policy—that is, committed to deregulation with a vengeance. But when Reagan is not interceding on behalf of old Hollywood friends, he and his appointee are quite compatible. One bit of deregulation for which neither would shed even a crocodile tear is the elimination of the Fairness Doctrine, the very centerpiece of

broadcast regulation in this country. The doctrine requires that broadcasters devote air time with balance to issues of public importance, affording an opportunity for airing all significant positions on the particular issue.

This beleaguered doctrine is the object of yearly legislative assaults championed by the National Association of Broadcasters, an industry group that sorely needs a rallying cry for its increasingly fractious membership. Because the Fairness Doctrine was incorporated into the Communications Act of 1934, its elimination would require action by Congress, where fortunately it has several key supporters. Unfortunately, though, the FCC has the authority—and the inclination—to modify the doctrine to a point of irrelevance. So, short of turning out the current regime, we (the public) need to learn to exercise our broadcast rights which, like muscles, atrophy with inactivity. To this end the San Francisco-based Public Media Center has recently released a first-rate guide to *Talking Back* for people who are mad as hell and aren't going to take it anymore.

The book's first section traces the legislative and judicial evolution of the Fairness Doctrine. When a broadcaster receives a license (a federally protected monopoly on a particular portion of the public's airwaves), he acts as a "trustee" and entails certain obligations, principally the Fairness Doctrine. The first part of the doctrine—the coverage requirement, which the FCC has said is the most "basic art"—is in fact weaker than the balance requirement. This is because the FCC, through its rulings, has created a disincentive for broadcasters to provide coverage of controversial issues by providing no guidelines as to what is "a reasonable amount of time," nor even what is a "controversial issue of public importance." The book cites other FCC enforcement rulings, major legal challenges and subsequent modifications, providing the reader with a solid grounding in the principles and decisional criteria that are still active and bringing us up to date on the rather emasculated state of the doctrine today.

Concisely written in an ironic tone, this is essentially a how-to guide—but one with a difference. Not only is it an invaluable tool for those inclined to exercise their rights in broadcasting; it also actively cajoles groups to use them. "Many non-profit groups fail to take advantage of the power of broadcast media," the authors lament, and they evidently aim to correct this situation. They flatly state, "Your goal should be to feel that you've had some effect on the attention the station pays to the problem of concern to you and your group." But despite the occasionally irreverent tone, this is no self-righteous leftie tract. The authors want results.

To this end they sensibly spell out the conditions under which you might have a legitimate fairness complaint and delineate how to go about gathering the necessary information to make your case. Given the relative heterogeneity (believe it or not) of station managements, the specificity of fairness complaints and the numer-

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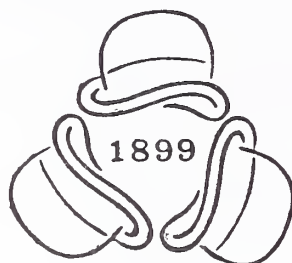


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ous gray areas, some legal advice may be necessary. The vast majority of complaints, though, are settled at the local level with a phone call or two. The basic approach to stations, need we be reminded, should be cooperative. No specific individual or group has the right to demand a place on the broadcast schedule. You do, however, have the right to expect that the coverage of "your" issue will be balanced. By helping the station be more balanced you are also helping yourself. "To convince a station that you are going to be helpful (not overly demanding or confrontational)," the authors write, "you'll need to be clear, direct, and reliable—in other words, professional... Your broadcast rights are powerful levers. The secret (if there is one) is to seek a relationship with your local station in which you never need to threaten to throw the lever, file formal complaints, and end up talking through lawyers." Additional sections detail bargaining strategies to get time that will have an impact similar to those viewpoints which you are trying to balance, as well as those to be employed with the FCC when dealing with a recalcitrant licensee.

Another chapter is devoted to flexing broadcast rights during initiative campaigns where corporate media expenditures invariably swamp public interest/grassroots monies, sometimes by ratios as large as 100-to-1. With a minimum investment of staff and resources, the authors contend, local organizations can amplify their voices far beyond their limited economic means. Finally, in addition to appendices that list various activist resources and exhibit models of actual correspondence, there is a fascinating compilation of case history condensations.

Perhaps more important than specifics, this book enables one to become generally acquainted with broadcast rights (there are others besides the Fairness Doctrine), and to learn to exercise them regularly. With the further corporatization of America, it is only through developing wider and deeper legislative support for these public rights that we can expect to counteract what has been a steadily mounting assault against the First Amendment in this realm. As the rules restricting media cross-ownership dissolve (brace yourself for the spate of mergers in the communications industry when the "rule of 7s"—which restricts the number of stations a broadcast entity can own—is scotched, as Fowler soon intends), it is not surprising that print titans like the *New York Times* (which is now in the cable biz) are now more vocal in advocating abolition of the Fairness Doctrine and other governmental safeguards of the public's First Amendment rights. They marshal self-serving arguments, claiming their First Amendment rights are seriously infringed upon by these minimal regulations. As a recent *Channels* magazine article points out, the Fairness Doctrine barely exists nowadays because the discretionary latitude of the FCC allows it to wriggle out of ruling on complaints. Enforcement may change with a new administration, but the fact that these public interest measures are on the books does keep many broadcasters in line. We should do our share to

ensure that they meet their responsibilities to us. After all, the authors note, "at stake is the success of the democratic experiment." —Ken Stier

can cable put the  
vision back in tv?

## CULTIVATING THE WASTELAND

kirsten beck



Beck's book asks if the TV wasteland can be cultivated.

### Cultivating the Wasteland

By Kirsten Beck. New York: American Council for the Arts and Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, 1983, \$14.95.

*Cultivating the Wasteland* addresses the issue of arts programming on cable television—its rocky history and uncertain future. Along the way it raises questions about the direction of cable TV's development in America and the future of the arts—especially the performing arts—in an age of unparalleled technological advancement. Unfortunately, the book does not answer the question emblazoned on its cover: "Can cable put the vision back in TV?"

If readers can traverse these ill-organized pages without letting their minds wander to what's on MTV, they will get a generalized picture of the history of the cable industry, the development of standards and policies which govern it, and early attempts to launch viable cultural programming on various national cable systems—always, it seems, foiled by the sluggishness of the advertising industry to accept the concept of narrowcasting as a lucrative approach to reaching the upscale audience. There is a discussion of the feasibility of advertising-supported cable and, for those with a penchant for corporate gossip, the inside story of the already over-reported CBS Cable debacle.

It takes 157 pages for author Kirsten Beck, a media consultant for such recent cable initiatives as the City of New Haven, to clearly state the astonishing conclusion of her research: the future of cultural programming on cable TV lies not in the giant cultural services like the ill-fated CBS or modestly successful ARTS attempts, but in local origination and public access where there is room for experimentation and not so



much money at stake. In the subsequent maze of tedious anecdotes which describe the experiences of various arts organizations as they entered the world of cable TV at the local level, Beck pops up now and again to suggest that our nation's visual artists, theaters, orchestras and ballets get in on the local franchising process at the beginning, as soon as cable's inevitable arrival seems imminent in their communities.

Those who have been watching the developments in Congress and the FCC concerning public access requirements and the municipal cable franchise will doubtless find *Wasteland's* starry-eyed optimism about a flowering of cultural television somewhat premature if not naive. Moreover, Beck's own description of the human and financial resources required to accomplish the navigation of the franchising process leads one to wonder how any but the most well-staffed, well-funded cultural institutions can afford to approach the cable medium on any level at all and continue to fulfill their original purpose of creating art.

The least successful part of *Cultivating the Wasteland* is the chapter devoted to a discussion of the transformation of performance from one medium (such as opera or theater) to television. Unlike Beck, every performing artist and arts administrator worth his or her salt knows the importance of such necessities as comfortable working conditions and sufficient, well-planned rehearsal time for producing a successful performance in any medium. There is also more to translating live performance to the screen than "making it smaller." However, Beck's view of "the arts" does not seem to include media artists, and her only mention of independent film and videomakers is a reference to a mucked-up filming of a Guthrie Theatre production for cable by an independent. The role media artists are playing in creating and translating the performance for the small screen is ignored.

Arts organizations will find the most valuable information in the book in an additional section compiled by Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. "Copyright Fundamentals," "Elements of Deal-Making" and "The Concept of Negotiation" by R. Bruce Rich, Richard J. Lorber and Timothy J. DeBaets respectively contain useful material for anyone considering a plunge into television production. There is also a bibliography and an index of organizations and associations interested in the direction of cable policy.

*Cultivating the Wasteland* is of interest as a simply stated compendium of major polarities and issues that have grown up around the "cable explosion." It is somewhat useful as a history and explanation of the often confusing developments that have shaped the cable industry. But as an insightful analysis of the role of cultural cable—or any kind of cable, for that matter—in "putting the vision back in TV," it falls far short. In the book's title chapter the author states, "The real promise of cable TV for the arts at the local level will be fulfilled only when artists and arts organizations shake free of broadcast television's values and treat cable as a 'blank canvas.'" However, all of the evidence

presented in the rest of the text utterly contradicts the possibility that such a promise exists.

To put vision into an entity which has lost it implies new direction, creative strategy, innovative action. *Cultivating the Wasteland* suggests nothing new, nothing creative or experimental for dealing with cable television today. The real message to artists is a familiar one: once again the arts must pioneer in the wasteland, and the terrain is barren indeed.

—Mary Guzzy

## The ASC Treasury of Visual Effects

Edited by George E. Turner, with Linwood G. Dunn. *Hollywood: American Society of Cinematographers Holding Co., 1983, \$29.95.*

When the great German cinematographer Karl Freund (*The Last Laugh*, *Metropolis*) matriculated to Hollywood in 1929, he was amazed, and not a little disconcerted, to learn that special visual effects—glass shots, miniatures, in-camera mattes, stop motion—were assigned to specialists. At the vast UFA studio in Berlin, Freund, in the slow, deliberate manner of an Old World craftsman, had mastered both silent live action and "trick" photography. But the classic days of the protean silent cameraman were drawing to a close. The brash studios of Hollywood, with the Depression closing in, sought new economies in production. When the requirements of the newly-created sound stage put a fresh premium on location-saving artifice, they built whole studio departments around those who chose to specialize in photographing pure invention.

In this collection of vintage *American Cinematographer* reprints and original articles, we meet not the celebrated Karl Freunds, Gregg Tolands and James Wong Howes of this pivotal period, but their counterparts behind the high-speed process cameras and optical printers. From its well-illustrated pages, names such as Linwood Dunn, John Fulton, Donald Jahrous and Farciot Edouart—whose artfully faked visual effects are seamlessly woven into the fabric of almost every American film of the '30s and '40s—duly emerge from the anonymity of the big studio.

The first-rate introduction, "The Evolution of Special Visual Effects" by editor George Turner, provides a necessary overview. From what was probably the very first special effect—the head of Mary, Queen of Scots, flying from the chopping block in an 1895 Edison Kinetoscope "historic dramatization"—to the latest motion control feat of George Lucas, Turner supplies names, dates, titles. He acknowledges George Melies, Robert Paul, Edwin S. Porter, C. Dodge Dunning, Eugen Schufftan; notes early contributions of the British, German, and even Australian film industries; describes background projection, optical printing, the initial motion control attempts; and in so doing completes the historical framework for what is to follow.

What follows, and what is most remarkable about this volume, is that these men tell their own stories: all but two of the 25 contributions were authored by effects experts themselves. Many of these veteran cinematographers shared their

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youth with the industry's—cinema has yet to mark its first centenary—and were its original innovators. This, then, is more than a technical textbook or how-to manual. It is cinema history in the first person: authoritative, anecdotal and enlightening.

Clarence Slifer, for example, "lived with *Gone with the Wind* almost 16 hours a day for 11 months," photographing more than 100 matte paintings. He recalls with some pride the challenging novelty of blending matte paintings with live action through the Technicolor three-strip process, with its lab logistics—and concomitant anxiety levels—in triplicate. (These were the days when "nothing was duped, and we worked only on the original negative.") Likewise, Linwood Dunn describes with almost parental delight the homemade optical printer he operated at RKO in 1934. Dunn's jazzy wipes and "turn-over" transitional effects in films such as *Flying Down to Rio* and *Citizen Kane* enriched the grammar of film and, as the biography preceding his article notes, "appeared in almost every RKO picture during a 25-year span [and] became a trademark of the distinctive RKO style."

For those so inclined, there are technical tips to be gleaned. Albert Whitlock, whose matte painting technique suggests French Impressionism, obtains the original photography's timing lights from the lab. If the original is "a little low in exposure—which can happen—then the painting should be a little on the low side, so it will still have the same look." And Don Jahrous shares the secret of shooting miniatures: "A peculiar feature of miniatures is that, despite this need for detail, the scene must be both lighted and photographed softly. The inexperienced cinematographer will almost inevitably photograph his scenes too crisply, which will destroy completely the desired illusion of naturalness."

In addition to miniatures, matte paintings and optical effects, *Treasury of Visual Effects* explores the history and practice of rear and front screen projection, and blue and sodium screen compositing processes. Anyone confused as to the exact nature of the blue screen process (and this includes practically everyone) will appreciate L.B. Abbott's concise explanation and diagrams. What won't be found in *Treasury* are discussions of pyrotechnics, firearms, breakaway props and the like. (If that's your interest, a better place to begin might be *Special Effects in Motion Pictures*, published by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers.)

That today's special visual effects serve mostly science fiction themes is evidenced by the final selections: "Mechanical Effects for *Logan's Run*," "Photographic Effects for *The Empire Strikes Back*" and "Electronic and Animation Effects for *Tron*." But during the '30's and '40's, the use of visual effects techniques to simulate familiar locales was mainstream. The microphones available in the '30's required the elimination of location background noise; therefore, studio rear-screen projection, which also eliminated the background, was common. (Kodak even introduced a special film for this purpose, super fine-grain Eastman Background Negative, in 1933.) As the war broke out and the coastal areas were



A frame from Lotte Reiniger's 1926 film, *Adventures of Prince Achmed*, from the *ASC Treasury of Visual Effects*.

declared combat zones in which photography was prohibited, these techniques took on even more significance. In the '50's and '60's, however, the same march of technology that engendered visual effects techniques doomed them to disuse. Improved microphones, portable magnetic tape recorders and portable blimped cameras made location work appealing once again.

Today, the simple techniques that Karl Freund enjoyed in the '20's produce results that are not so much believable as fun. The use of these techniques doesn't save time or money, but anyone on any budget can experiment with them. More complex techniques requiring rear-screen projection, blue screen matting, or extensive optical printing are best left to Hollywood—unless you have a Hollywood-sized budget. In any case, to limit special effects to science fiction is to limit the imagination.

Two short concluding remarks. First, there are no women in this book. Or almost none. Turner's intro mentions Lotte Reiniger, a German woman animating Indonesian-style shadow puppet plays in the early '20's. And there's a photo of Deena Burkett, scene coordinator, examining a *Tron* kodolith. In between, a sort of boy-with-erector-set tone prevails. Were there no female effects experts in Hollywood?

Second, it should be obvious from the photograph accompanying the *Superman* article that the miniature helicopter is plummeting not down the face of the "Citibank Building," but rather of the Daily News Building, a late deco New York landmark designed by Raymond Hood, which in no way resembles the silver-skinned CitiCorp Building. Let's get our miniatures straight! —David Leitner

### Eastman Professional Motion Picture Films

Rochester: Eastman Kodak Co., 1982, \$9.95.

### The Book of Film Care

Rochester: Eastman Kodak Co., 1983, \$12.95.

Kodak can mean more than a yellow box or a round can, as these concise, well-written books attest.

*Eastman Professional Motion Picture Films* (Publication H-1) is not, despite its uninspired title, a catalogue of Kodak products. It's a vastly improved, enlarged and updated version of the more aptly titled 1972 *Selection and Use of Kodak and Eastman Motion Picture Films*. Wider in scope than the original, it's simply the most accessible, most authoritative primer on the subject of film stock technology today.

The book lists current Kodak films and their



applications (although recent camera negatives 7291, 7284, 5294, and low contrast print stock 7380/5380 are missing). However, much of the text concerns the behavior and physical characteristics of film in general. Using the "data sheet" that Kodak openly publishes for each stock, Publication H-1 explores basic technical specifications such as spectral sensitivity, the characteristic curve, the modulation transfer curve, RMS granularity, resolving power. These seemingly arcane concepts, when carefully and clearly explained, actually become useful. The question of which film stock is sharper can be readily answered by comparing data sheets—a cheaper, faster, less frustrating endeavor than filming a possibly inconclusive test.

After a description of perforations and a table listing latent edge designations for various stock types, H-1 features a short section devoted to color reproduction, filtration and light balancing. Anyone who's ever wondered why a blue morning glory reproduces on film as violet will find the answer here. Included is a brief but solid introduction to color temperature which takes note of the limits of color temperature measurement. (You'll learn, by the way, that "mireds" are now to be called "reciprocal megakelvins.")

The last section of H-1 is ambitiously titled "Dealing with a Laboratory." There's a labyrinthine flow chart that King Minos would be proud of, detailing the tortuous, often tangled path a production takes through the laboratory. It's on the mark, though. There are also film reproduction flow charts, displaying the various steps and options in deriving release prints from camera original. Lastly, processing and printing techniques are examined in detail.

Where *Motion Picture Films* leaves off, *The Book of Film Care* (Publication H-23) takes over. Anyone who handles film after it becomes Film is obliged to know this book. With some wit, *Film Care* notes that the word "film" is descended from an Old English word for skin, and that, like skin, film can be scratched, blistered by chemicals or heat, damaged by prolonged exposure to the sun, grow dry and brittle in the cold, be infected by fungus in hot humidity, and burn. It poses the question, "We spend billions on skin care each year and know much about it. Why not consider film the same way?"

Kodak is not the problem here. There's been a lot of ruckus over the past five years concerning color fading and nitrate disintegration—as well there might be. But in a modest yet detailed 1957 brochure, *Storage and Preservation of Motion Picture Film*—the direct predecessor of *Film Care*—Kodak, with explicit photographs, depicted both the volatility of nitrate-based stock and the rank danger in storing it. They even went so far as to publish "a suggested design for an air-conditioned six-hour fire-resistant vault for archival storage of safety motion picture film." Perhaps if the Mexican Cineteca Nacional had heeded this timely yet timeless warning (the same photos and vault plans are reproduced a quarter century later in *Film Care*), the recent near-total loss of Mexico's national cinema heritage to fire could have been avoided.

Also from 1957: "All organic dyes, whether used in color films, paper or textiles, do gradually fade. . . . For this reason, the American Standard for permanent record films specifically excludes the use of dye images for this purpose." There never was any claim to color permanence—or any other type of permanence, for that matter. That's why Scorsese's celebrated cry and hue several years ago was ill-informed and misdirected. Instead of suggesting malfeasance on the part of Kodak, or any other film manufacturer, he should have fingered the commercial film industry, which consciously opted for blissful ignorance when it came to the subject of costly, non-income producing film preservation measures. (Home video-era footnote: with MGM/UA's film library recently valued at \$733 million, Disney's at \$500 million, and so on, Hollywood is vigorously championing the new-found cause.)

*The Book of Film Care* is Kodak's latest attempt to spread the word concerning the well-being of the product it invented almost a century ago. And a handsome, well-organized effort it is. This time, for instance, there is a reader's directory, which points individuals with specific needs to the pertinent chapters and appendices. The guide suggests specific chapters of interest for such categories as film archivists, projectionists, film professors, film lab owners and theater managers. And, it adds, "If you are a film buff, read the whole book; you'll love it!"

After an inspired chapter extolling film's history and legacy, *Film Care* describes film's compositional and mechanical properties. These are related to such conditions of storage and preservation as humidity, temperature and air

purification. While the technical detail is necessarily dry, it's presented graphically, and the text is lively and informative. Dye stability merits its own chapter, as does the handling and maintenance of processed film. The latter includes the most incisive introduction to film splicing I've ever come across (a must for beginning film students!), as well as an instructive series of photos sadly showcasing the exotic-sounding maladies that inflict poorly wound, stored and projected film: buckle, fluting, twist, curl, spoking, embossing.

Other sections cover film damage evaluation; film cleaning methods; theatrical projection, with proper emphasis on sprocket wear and screen luminance; and the companion topics of film rejuvenation and restoration. These last two chapters feature an up-to-date listing of individuals and companies across the US and Canada that specialize in film rejuvenation and/or restoration. I believe this is the first time such a list has been drawn.

The useful appendix reproduces a 13-page International Standards Organization document—approved in 1975 by the US, Canada, USSR, various European countries and Japan—which standardizes the use of black-and-white only for archival purposes. For color, this spells red, green, and blue separation positives, a la Technicolor. The appendix also lists the 53 members and observers of the International Federation of Film Archives, and 83 international motion picture periodicals. If you wish, you can subscribe to *Sovetskii Film* in English, *Foto-Kino Revija* in Serbo-Croatian, or for \$2.60 a quarter, *China's Screen*, possibly in English. Write Box 399, Peking, to be sure. —DL ■

## Summary of AIVF Minutes

The AIVF/FIVF Boards met on 4/18/84. Present: Pearl Bowser, Matt Clarke, Bill Greaves, Lillian Jimenez, Mary Lucier, Robert Richter, Tom Turley, Larry Sapadin; AIVF staffers Marry Guzy and Renee Tajima; AIVF member Robert Spencer. Absent: Loni Ding, Peter Kinoy, Denise Oliver, Richard Schmiechen.

Renee Tajima discussed controversy over an *Independent Media Clip* critical of the National Black Programming Consortium. It was agreed that Mabel Haddock, executive director of NBPC, should write a letter to the editor, which could be published with an accompanying editorial reply.

Sapadin reported on negotiations between the *ad hoc* producers Coalition and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Currently, the lobbying effort is back in full force due to CPB Board's rejection of the agreement between the Coalition and CPB's legal department. The likely outcome is Congressional Report language accompanying CPB's funding bill addressing independent's concerns with a view towards Congressional oversight hearings if improvements are not made. Outreach to media groups not directly in-

involved in the negotiations was proposed.

Sapadin reported that the original negotiating group had been asked to submit names for the CPB peer panel pool, and asked for suggestions from the board.

An informal agenda for the April 19 membership meeting, including the nomination of new board members, was set. Six places are up for reelection. Turley, Clarke and Oliver will not seek reelection. Jimenez, Richter and Greaves will run again.

It was moved that a committee explore the fundraising and media possibilities for the 10th Anniversary Event. The board committee members are Richter, Bowser, Clarke and Jimenez.

Due to the increased cost of flying in out-of-town board members, it was suggested that fewer full board meetings and more executive committee meetings be held. Staff reports presented in advance of full board meetings and more membership participation in AIVF committees were proposed.

A need for board leadership of the organization was raised by Renee Tajima.

Date of the next board meeting was not set; please call AIVF for details. ■



# Financial Set-Ups: For-Profit

*What you should and shouldn't do when you go the for-profit route.*

Paula R. Schaap

Last month, in Part I of this article, we followed the fame and fortune of Wheeler Dealer as he heroically strove to finance his independent production through the not-for-profit route. Suppose, though, that Wheeler has a project in hand that he knows, deep in his heart, could be another *Halloween*, or at least another *Smithereens*. It's that gem of gems, a low-budget independent production that could make money. And besides the fact that Wheeler's subject is potentially commercial, he would prefer to personally reap the benefits of his efforts, rather than reinvest the profits in another not-for-profit project.

Manuel Arce, the producer of *The Crossover Dream*, thinks that he has a film with commercial potential. *The Crossover Dream* is about the rise and fall of a young "Nuyorican" salsa singer who tries to break into the American record industry, only to find that his roots still haunt him. Arce was aware that "a film like ours is not in the American mainstream: it's about a subculture." Nevertheless, he felt that "people are becoming more aware of the Spanish market" and, therefore, thought the film could be funded through private investment. *The Crossover Dream* is an example of a for-profit film which could probably have also been funded as a not-for-profit project if its creators had been willing to make certain changes in focus and style.

The initial step in the for-profit fundraising process is to set up a for-profit corporation whose purpose is to produce a feature-length film. Incorporating as a for-profit corporation is not much more difficult than incorporating as a not-for-profit corporation. However, the legal work involved in offering shares in the film to private investors is infinitely more complicated and expensive.

## SELLING SHARES & DISCLOSING RISKS

Once private investors are involved, the Securities and Exchange Commission steps into the picture. The securities regulations are designed to protect the public against smooth operators who want to sell shares in scenic swamplands or dry oil wells to unwary investors.

*Author's note: This article is presented only for the purposes of educating the independent filmmaker in some basic legal principles. It is not to be taken as legal advice. Every financing situation is different, the law constantly changes, and the laws in each state can vary widely. The independent filmmaker should, therefore, always consult his or her attorney before undertaking any course that may have legal ramifications.*

People who sell investment shares—and this includes selling shares in the profits of a film—must comply with both federal and state securities regulations. These regulations require that there be full disclosure of all the risks that are involved in the investment. Disclosure is made through a legal document called an offering memorandum.

When a public corporation, such as AT&T or Columbia Pictures, places its shares on the market, it must file elaborate financial statements with the SEC in addition to the offering memorandum. For shares that are not being offered to the general public, however, the offeror can be exempted from the filing requirements if he complies with certain guidelines.

The most important thing for Wheeler to know about an exempt offering (also known as a private placement or a Regulation D offering) is that he can sell shares in the film to only a limited number of investors. For simplicity's sake, we shall say that the limit is 35 investors. Some types of investors, however, will not be included in the 35-person limit. These include, for example, financial institutions and extremely wealthy individuals, perhaps because the SEC assumes that they can more readily cover potential losses.

Furthermore, Wheeler cannot raise a portion of the money through an offering to 35 investors, and, a few months later when that money is gone, make an offering to another 35 investors. The 35-investor limit applies to the entire film project, not to parts of it.

Producer Phillip Kozma ran into this problem when he was trying to raise money for *Breach of Contract*, a film about the problems that plague a young professional couple who face a career vs. family conflict. Kozma raised the initial budget of \$750,000 through a private offering, but the film went over budget. Once the private placement money was spent, his hands were legally tied. Luckily, one of his initial investors agreed to loan Kozma the money to complete the film.

Because of these legal limitations, Wheeler would be well-advised to assess his investor pool with a cool and dispassionate eye. He should ask himself if he has access to a few very wealthy investors, or if his less wealthy investors can invest enough money to keep him safely within the 35-person limit. (It is also important to note that while all of his investors do not have to be oil barons, Wheeler must not take advantage of people who are inexperienced in business or who do not have the economic wherewithal to lose

large sums of money.) Now is the time for Wheeler to stop kicking wealthy old Aunt Peg's pedigreed chihuahua, or to listen attentively when Seymour, his father's boyhood chum who cashed in during the recent stock rally, launches into his patented "I know what's wrong with America today" speech.

There are two main legal documents that must be prepared for a private offering: first, the offering memorandum and second, the limited partnership agreement.

## OFFERING MEMORANDUM

The SEC requires that an investor in Wheeler's film be fully warned that he will probably lose his money. Filmmaking is a very high risk business, often compared to wildcat oil drilling. Given the competitiveness of the film industry and the difficulties that are often encountered during production and postproduction, it is impossible for Wheeler to guarantee his investors any return on their investment.

According to Robert Nowotny, who is currently in the process of raising money for a film, a producer can try to offset some of the risks. Nowotny has the rights to *Tramp Star*, an original fiction screenplay. In *Tramp Star*, a Texas town is seized by "comet fever" when Haley's Comet passes by the earth in 1910. "You need to be aligned with people who are known in the industry, people who have major film experience," Nowotny said. "It's not easy, but if you have a good project, you can do it. Then it's easier to go to your investors."

In addition to trying to recruit well-known talent and an experienced production crew, Wheeler should obtain a completion bond. The corporation or individual who puts up the completion bond guarantees that the film will be completed. Unfortunately, the bond is a significant added expense, and Wheeler may lose control over the end product if the completion company has to step in. It will be difficult to sell investors on the project, however, if there is no completion bond.

Prior to 1977, films could be sold as tax shelters by a device called "leverage." Leverage meant that the individual investors would put up a percentage of the budget, say, 40 percent, and the remaining 60 percent would be borrowed from a bank, with the proceeds from the film as collateral. If the film lost money, the individual investors could take a loss deduction not only for the amount they personally invested, but also for the amount that was provided by the



bank. Wealthy investors could use their enhanced loss deduction to offset income from other sources.

Unfortunately, Congress called a halt to the practice of leverage in 1976. Today, an investor can only take a loss deduction for those sums for which he is personally at risk. While there are still some tax advantages to investing in a film—for example, investors can take a tax credit in the year the film is released—a film should not be presented as a tax shelter situation to potential investors.

The offering memorandum sets forth all the risks and tax ramifications of investing in a film. It is a long, complicated document that must be in compliance with federal and state securities regulations. This is one instance where it is imperative to have a lawyer. The lawyer should have a background in securities and tax law, and preferably have experience in offerings for films. Even if Wheeler is prepared to do the necessary research and draft an offering memorandum, a lawyer must be called in to check the form. Some lawyers may be willing to defer part of their fee, or take a percentage of the profits in lieu of the fee. As with other preproduction expenses, the lawyer's fees should be included in the film's budget.

Every investor in the film must be furnished with a copy of the offering memorandum and the limited partnership agreement before he invests. If Wheeler has promotional literature for the investors, it should also be reviewed by his attorney to ensure that nothing will mislead the investors.

### LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

The second part of the offering materials is the limited partnership agreement. This is the most common organizational form used for offering shares in a film. A limited partnership consists of a general partner, who manages the day-to-day business of the partnership, and the limited partners, who are the investors. The limited partners have no say over normal business decisions. The advantage of this kind of arrangement is that the limited partners are protected from liability in the same way as corporate shareholders are protected. In addition, any tax gains, losses, deductions or credits that accrue to the film are "passed through" to the limited partners, who report them on their individual tax returns.

To illustrate the "pass through" concept: If Wheeler's film is depreciated at a certain rate, each limited partner will be able to take a depreciation deduction in proportion to his share in the total investment.

The limited partnership agreement sets forth the terms that will govern the relationship between the general partner and the limited partners. In the case of Wheeler's film, he and his production company will act as the general partner.

An important aspect of the agreement is that it sets forth the division of the profits from the film. One common way of dividing the profits is a 50/50 split between the general partner and the

Courtesy Filmmaker



Manuel Arce took the for-profit dive to produce *The Crossover Dream*, here on location at Coney Island.

limited partners until the limited partners have recovered their initial investment. At that point, the split often shifts to a greater proportion for the general partner.

Once the documents have been drafted, and old Aunt Peg finds it in her heart not only to invest in Wheeler's film, but also to interest her bridge club in the investment, the offering is made. Although an exempt offering does not have to file lengthy financial statements, the SEC still requires that a notice of the offering be filed. In addition, Wheeler will usually have to file similar notices with each state in which the securities have been sold. The limited partnership must also be registered in the state in which it is formed. This is usually the state where Wheeler's production company has been incorporated or is doing business.

The biggest pitfall which Wheeler may encounter in trying to raise money through private sources is underestimating the amount of money needed to complete his film. In deciding how much money is needed, Wheeler should consider the fact that films almost always go over budget. Manuel Arce raised enough money through an initial private placement to finish a rough cut, but he is now having problems raising the money to re-shoot parts of the film. "It's hard because people don't feel that they have input once the rough cut is completed," Arce noted. And Phillip Kozma said that next time, he would raise more money for development costs. "It hurts the quality of the film to be always worrying about money."

### OTHER PRIVATE SOURCES

There are, of course, other avenues to successfully financing a film. *Android*, which was released in England in 1983 and in the United States this year, was made through a special deal with New World Pictures (when New World was still owned by Roger Corman). New World put up one-half of the budget in exchange for the United States and Canadian rights, while the other half was supplied by Android Productions (which was formed just to produce *Android*). Android Productions' original investment was

raised through loans rather than a private placement.

"Although New World liked the film" when it was completed, according to producer Barry Oppen, "there was a disagreement over promotion." A new production company, SHO Films, formed by the Android Productions people, bought back New World's rights so that SHO Films would have exclusive, worldwide control over the film's distribution and promotion. SHO Films raised the money to buy New World's half interest through a private placement.

SHO Films now has a joint venture agreement with Videofarm Pictures, an English company, for a second film. Oppen said that he vastly preferred a joint venture because the paperwork and legal costs of a private placement are prohibitive. "Until you have a track record, you can't raise large sums unless you can turn to family or close acquaintances who know enough about you and have money to risk," he said. He acknowledged, however, that *Android*'s success in England was the track record which enabled him to work out a joint venture arrangement with Videofarm.

With all the problems inherent in the for-profit route to financing, why do so many producers attempt it? Robert Nowotny answered succinctly: "Control. I feel that I can combine my business experience with my business contacts to raise the money to make the kind of film I want to make." Barry Oppen agreed, "We want to have control over projects that excite us. We don't want to remake last year's successes. If we have a genre movie, we want to be free to take a new approach."

Wheeler has cast his lot with the not-for-profit or the for-profit markets. The money has been raised and is rapidly being spent on what promises to be a work of art. So we'll leave Wheeler for now, arguing with old Aunt Peg that she doesn't have to "feel" her character to play a woman walking her dog. Yes, in return for a hefty investment, Wheeler had to promise her and the chihuahua a walk-on part. That's entertainment.

Paula R. Schaap is a writer and entertainment lawyer.



# The American Film Institute:

*The AFI is America's "premiere film institution." Whom does it serve?*

As expressed in its annual reports, the American Film Institute's major objective is a noble one: "to increase recognition and understanding of the moving image as an art form." The 1966 Stanford Research Institute Report, which first defined the scope and purpose of the Institute's role in film culture, sets forth equally high goals: the nurturance of "film excellence which will in turn stimulate higher artistic standards in audiences," the promotion of "professional standards of competence" and the support of "creative activities and creative talent [in]... a climate of freedom of thought, inquiry, imagination and individual initiative." Like motherhood, "excellence," "professional standards" and "freedom of thought" are values to which few would object. The problem is that the meaning of these words largely depends on whomever is saying them. And independents have long suspected that, when AFI speaks, Hollywood is talking. What does AFI see as the most urgent need of the media field? The money devoted to its new campus answers the question; the consequences of the resulting debt have affected what many consider the most crucial, underserved areas of the film and video arts.

Any account of the Institute today must begin with the purchase of a multi-million dollar piece of Los Angeles real estate four years ago. The acquisition of the eight-and-a-half acre site was practically the first act of AFI director Jean Firstenberg, and was a considered a great coup by many. For the previous 12 years, AFI's Los Angeles home was Greystone, a castle-like testament to California architectural whimsy in the heart of Beverly Hills which housed its film school, the Center for Advanced Film Studies. The mansion's luxurious interior was ill-suited for a film institute, lacking proper space to screen films or hold production classes, and maintenance costs ate up close to \$150,000 a year. But the yearly rent, payable to the City of Beverly Hills, was an affordable one dollar.

Firstenberg had barely moved into her Washington office when the Institute got word that it was about to lose its Beverly Hills bargain. AFI searched for and found an alternative site, the former campus of Immaculate Heart College. Its price tag was \$5 million, and it would require another \$5 million to equip and renovate. But within a few months, the deal was struck. All AFI had to do was raise \$10 million.

The early stages of the fundraising campaign

were marked by some impressive successes, as AFI reaped the rewards of its longtime cultivation of the movie industry. Warner Communications pledged \$2 million over 10 yearly installments. "A charitable foundation," as the AFI annual report puts it, guaranteed an interest-free loan of \$1 million. ARCO, Times Mirror, IBM, and television game-show czar Mark Goodson kicked in \$250,000 each, and HBO was nudged into raising its pledge from \$100,000 to \$250,000 as well. Sony donated money and equipment to the newly created video center. The studios—Paramount, Warners, Columbia—were less generous, committing a comparatively chintzy \$50,000 apiece. Elaine Hoffman, who served as director of development of AFI from January, 1981 until last August, claims that at the time the purchase was made, the Institute had pledges totalling \$5 million.

## DOOMED TO DEBT DILEMMA?

But the money momentum was not maintained. There were high hopes for a breakfast which AT&T hosted for AFI (William Ellinghaus, AT&T's president, had once been on the AFI board). "It was not very successful," Hoffman admits; gifts fell far short of the \$2 million anticipated, and host AT&T pledged \$50,000 instead of the hoped-for \$250,000. The faltering campaign has left AFI unable to meet its sizable loan commitments. In fiscal 1982, the Institute's account was in arrears to the tune of \$563,334; Union Bank deferred payment through the beginning of 1983. By June, 1983, \$1,690,002 due Union Bank was unpaid; again, a waiver was granted. But the toll of the new campus is mounting: in order to put its affairs in order, AFI will have to come up with \$4,500,000 in 1984. Two million more is owed in 1985-1986.

These little-publicized financial woes raise a number of questions about the place of independents within AFI. Independents have long hoped that the American Film Institute would help meet the pressing needs of their community, create new distribution outlets and nurture audience development. These are national problems. But in light of this enormous debt, can AFI afford to attend to matters beyond its campus borders? Has it become more tied to the cultural priorities of the industry on which it is now more economically dependent than ever? Whose cause does the new Los Angeles campus

serve? It is time to take a look at the current state of affairs at AFI to determine the nature and extent of independents' stake in this institution.

The jewel of the Los Angeles campus and the driving force behind its acquisition is the Center for Advanced Film Studies (CAFS). Back in 1966, when the Stanford Research Institute set its collective mind to determining the kinds of services that AFI could render, the researchers began with the assumption that their study "could focus most appropriately on the development of new, talented filmmakers—the people concerned with creating film art."

The irony of this decision is that filmmakers' training was the one service already in existence. The Stanford committee was not oblivious to this fact, noting that there were dozens of university-affiliated film schools (today the figure is much higher), including two prestigious ones—UCLA and USC—right in the neighborhood. The problem with such schools, in the committee's judgment, was that they were "predominantly oriented toward training for art, documentary and related types of films, not toward the dramatic feature," which, the committee determined, was the "one facet of film... largely responsible for the development of film as an art form."

## BETTER TEACHERS

Another failure of academic schools was their faculties, which "seldom include a significant number of film artists." The unique approach of AFI's school, the committee concluded, would be to instill "professional standards of competence" and offer "opportunities for the exercise of skills under professional conditions." In other words, the AFI school was to provide a link with the industry.

Alan Jacobs, ex-director of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers and one-time AFI board member, agreed that this is CAFS' great advantage. "There needs to be a place where new people have the chance to show what they can do. This is needed now because there is no longer a studio system to provide these opportunities. You can see it as a farm system, a place to develop talent." But if Hollywood needs a "farm system," why doesn't it pay for it? Why should federal subsidies support the future of the capital-rich movie industry?



# Mid-Life Crisis?

Debra Goldman

CAFS has succeeded in generating some credibility among the movers and shakers of Hollywood. One independent who completed the first year of the program and asked to remain unnamed, reports, "It has a very good reputation in Hollywood. Students get a lot of exposure and meet a lot of filmmakers. It's a good way to get an agent. It's really not a film school environment: it's more like a small Hollywood factory."

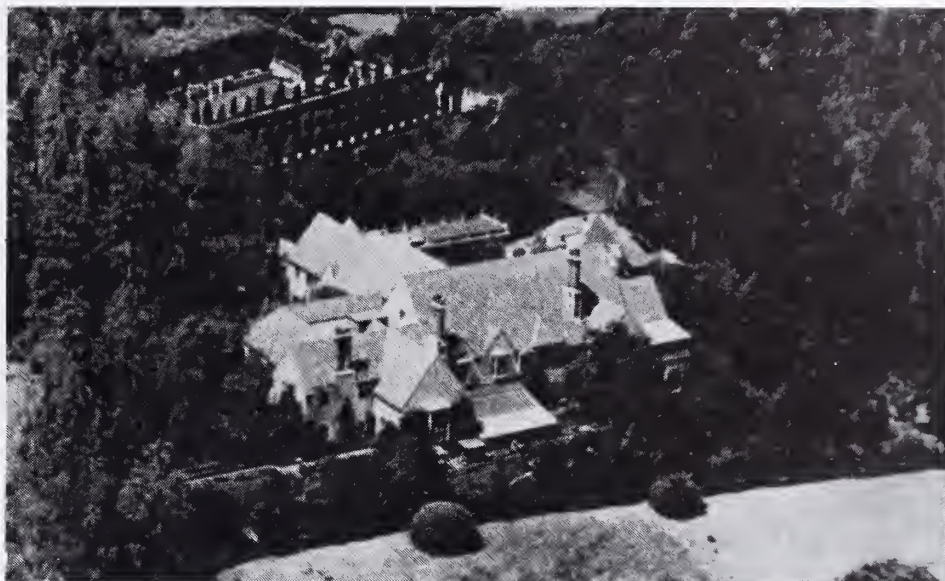
Yet another independent at CAFS, first-year fellow Glenn Silber, says that while "there are people who hang around, doing that shtick [of] finding out who's who," the notion that CAFS is just a venue into Hollywood is "something of an insult and a misconception." Nor does he buy the argument that the school is redundant. "Sure, there are other film schools. But are they any good? I'm not sure many of them are." He decided to go to CAFS after "beating my head against the wall to beg, borrow and steal money for my films. I came to realize that it is getting impossible to get support for even *successful* films about life and death matters. I wanted the option to make feature films that have a wider audience. This is a place where I can learn that craft."

The heart of the first-year program is the creation of three half-hour videotape productions, on which fellows from the directing, producing, writing and cinematography departments collaborate. The Institute supplies a small stipend, an equipment package and the free services of SAG actors. Directors have five days to shoot, two days to log, four days to edit; the final tape is critiqued by students and faculty. "It's a very hands-on program," Silber says. "In certain ways that's one of the drawbacks. We're barely required to read a book."

Only one-third of the first-year fellows are asked back for the second year of the program. The chosen few develop one or two scripts over the summer, and, after faculty review, five to eight projects are selected to be produced. AFI commits \$17,000 to each production, a 16mm equipment package, but no stock; the filmmaker is allowed to commit an additional \$17,000 of his or her own money.

## SAFE, CUTE STORIES

In selecting the films to be produced, production fellow Claudia Vianelli warns, "There is a strong emphasis on story-telling in the Holly-



▲ Greystone, the Hollywood answer to Hearst's castle, was AFI's unwieldy Los Angeles home for 12 years, an unsuitable facility but a bargain at \$1 per year payable to the City of Beverly Hills. But in 1980 the city pulled its subsidy and new director Firstenberg had to look elsewhere...



Sleeker and stuccoed, the old campus of Immaculate Heart College was proudly secured by AFI. But the new home may be streamlined in architecture only. A fundraising shortfall on the \$10 million campus has left AFI in the red and Indies wondering if there's money left for their needs.

Courtesy AFI

Courtesy AFI

Courtesy AFI



wood mode. If you're interested in avant-garde or experimental work, this is not the place." The anonymous independent agrees that the faculty favors "safe, nice, cute little stories. They could care less what you're trying to say. The school is building craftsmen for the industry, not exploring new ground."

Jacobs, a close observer of both AFI and the indie scene, believes independents have no quarrel with CAFS' priorities because of its emphasis on the supposedly neutral value of "craft." "No one knows what kind of films the people who go here will eventually make," he insists. "No one knows whether [former CAFS fellow] David Lynch is going to make an *Eraserhead* or *The Elephant Man*." Silber, a political documentarian who described himself as "the least likely filmmaker to be here," confirmed that his experience at the school does not "necessarily mean that I am going to make 'Hollywood' films in the future," but, he said, he was glad to learn the skills. Silber has a point: independent producers need more "options" these days because American film culture—or at least American funding sources—provide fewer of them.

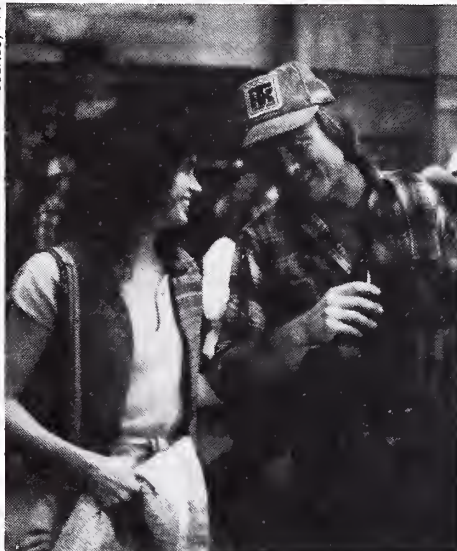
#### PROGRAM ORBITS

The filmmakers' school is the major, but not only, program on the Los Angeles campus. Since its purchase, the Institute has concentrated the majority of its activities there, so some other AFI programs have been drawn into the CAFS orbit. Education Services was moved west; although intended as a national information clearinghouse for academic film scholars, it has since become involved in organizing CAFS seminars featuring Hollywood professionals. The Sony Video Center, under the aegis of Television and Video Services, provides equipment for first-year fellows. The Student Film Distribution program, which is part of the catch-all Media Programs division, sells second-year student films to cable and public TV (such as *Miss Lonelyhearts*, broadcast this year as part of *American Playhouse*). Any money received from these sales goes first to the SAG actors who donated their talents to the projects. The remainder reverts back to the Institute to recoup its \$17,000 investment; in the unlikely event that there is then any money left over, it goes to the filmmaker.

Cost efficiency dictates that the National Video Festival, once a Washington event, now be held on LA property. In 1982, the TV/Video staff attempted to hold the festival on both coasts, but, says director James Hindman, "We almost killed ourselves and broke the budget, too." Hindman likes being situated in LA. The festival sponsors guest videomakers who show and talk about their work, "and we get a good mix. About half the audience is from the school, and the other half is from the general public. The problem in Washington is that we couldn't get people to come in and see video."

Exhibition Services is one of the programs which remains in Washington. In contrast to the bustling activity on the LA campus, Exhibition has had a hard couple of years, despite the suc-

Courtesy AFI



Leslie Hill's *The Tie That Binds* was supported by AFI's funds to indies.

cess of its touring programs. But the connection between AFI's investment of time and money in real estate and the Exhibition program's troubles remains unclear.

Exhibition Services began in 1980 as an expansion of AFI's outreach program, which, as the name implies, attempted to give AFI some badly needed presence in the rest of the country. In three years, Exhibition toured five programs, which were evenly divided between foreign films (New Hungarian Cinema, China Film Week) and independent films (New American Cinema, the Jewish Film Festival). The currently touring program, "American Film Institute Presents the British Film Institute," falls somewhere in-between.

Most of these tours stopped in major cities where foreign and independent films are relatively well known. However, they also went deeper into the media hinterlands: Whitesburg, Kentucky; Gainesville, Florida; St. Louis, Missouri; Lincoln, Nebraska. The press coverage of the New American Cinema tour illustrates why such a program is so important to indies. In Atlanta, a columnist patiently explained to her readers what independent film is. In Houston, another journalist urged the public to give independent film "a chance," referring to the showcase as "a lovechild" of AFI and its cosponsor, the Independent Feature Project.

#### BACK IN DC

But back in Washington, the exhibition staff was experiencing problems that did not feel much like love. Exhibition's 1981 budget was set at \$107,000. Four months into fiscal 1982, the staff was informed that its budget had been cut

61%, leaving the program with considerably less money than CAFS distributes each year to its second-year students. The staff was then asked to cut its budget by an additional 8-11%. Moreover, there were discrepancies between Exhibition's own financial records and the administrative budget printout; where the former showed revenues, the latter showed deficits. According to an internal AFI memo, a \$14,000 grant from the Ford Foundation somehow got "lost." Where did the money go? No one knows. In June, 1983, Exhibition director Nancy Sher was let go. The program was absorbed into a larger division including the Institute's other major piece of real estate, the AFI Theater in Washington.

A similar fate befell Education Services, which produced the AFI newsletter and monographs. At the beginning of 1980, the Education staff numbered 11. By spring of that year, two staffers had been laid off. And so it went, until the staff had dwindled to four. "We were told there were general budget cuts. There were different justifications," one dismissed employee says. "You just had to accept what they said, because the budgets were kept very secret. But I noticed that while we were losing people, the school was hiring additional part-timers." While Exhibition was cut, Education lost three more staffers, including program director Peter Bukalski. Only a single "educational liaison" remained.

Firstenberg has been upbeat about the staff cuts. "We feel good about them because there is a philosophical underpinning to this," she said. "You have to focus on what you can do very well." Intended as reassurance, her remarks read more like a confession. Nevertheless, Firstenberg reports that Education is coming back. "We never intended to cut it for long," she says. "We wanted to reassess and evaluate it. In July, we will rev it up again." But educators have seen Education Services come back before, and it may take a lot of "revving up" to convince them that AFI has any interest in their needs. Exhibition, too, is in good health, Firstenberg claims. "We would like to tour as much as possible. We have an Arab series coming up this fall." It will be followed by Japanese films and experimental Dutch cinema. But what about independents? The answer to that question might lie in LA, where the Filmex festival just settled into quarters on the AFI campus. Ken Wlashin, Filmex's director, has a good reputation with independents from his years with the London Film Festival. It will be interesting to see whether he can bring his knowledge to bear on any future collaborations with AFI.

#### A CERTAIN SOMETHING

How much influence does the National Endowment for the Arts have over affairs at AFI? According to the NEA, last year the Endowment contributed \$1.6 million to AFI's general fund, plus another million in contracts for such projects as Preservation and the Independent Filmmakers Program. As AFI's annual report reminds us, this represents only 26% of its





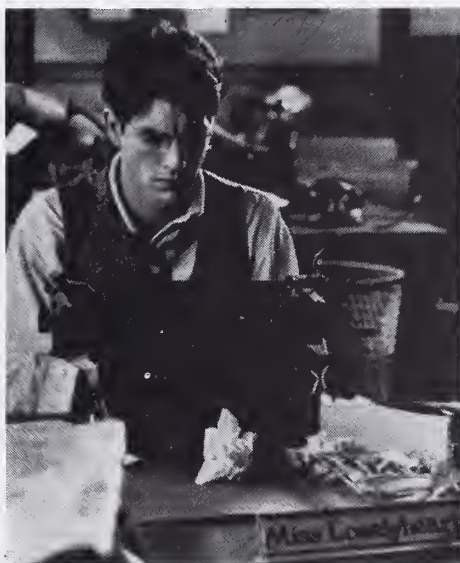
budget. On the other hand, AFI's grant represents more than a quarter of the NEA's total Media Arts budget of \$9 million, and it is a good deal more than the \$1.2 million given through the NEA Media Art Centers Program, which was divided among 100 organizations. Last year, none of these latter institutions received more than \$30,000 from the program. Moreover, because the Institute has its own funding panel at the NEA, AFI does not compete against other organizations for its share of NEA monies. Thus, while the august Museum of Modern Art must go up against the Alabama Film Co-op for its thousands of dollars, AFI gets its \$2 million-plus without being subjected to any competitive scrutiny.

AFI also maintains a special relationship with the NEA through contracted programs. The oldest of these is the Independent Filmmakers Program, through which the NEA has funneled money to individual producers since 1968. Martha Carrell, who until last March administered the program, described it as a "good, clean program" in which each year unspent administrative funds are recycled into additional grants. Open to experienced filmmakers only, last year the program gave \$262,757—all of it from the NEA—to 15 filmmakers in grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$20,000. Because grant winners have come predominantly from New York and California over the years, NEA and AFI launched a regional fellowship program in 1981-1982, which awards smaller grants in different parts of the country; to this latter program AFI commits dollars of its own.

Unfortunately, once the money is disbursed and accounted for, AFI forgets about the films—unless one happens to be nominated for an Academy Award, like Julia Reichert and James Klein's *Seeing Red*, in which case the Institute may send out a press release. But instead of ghettoizing its involvement with independents, the AFI could publicize its administrative good deeds by trying to get some of those films before an audience. A great number of the films featured in the "AFI Presents the BFI" series were originally funded by the British Film Institute; why not provide the same service for American indies? AFI already has a special program set up to sell the films of its students. Perhaps the problem is that, since the production funds for the most part don't come out of AFI's own pocket, the Institute is not very interested.

### PRESERVATION OR BUST

Preservation, hobbyhorse of NEA chairman Frank Hodsoll, is also administered by AFI administrators for the NEA. Like the AFI itself, preservation is one of those "needs" of film culture that was decided from on high. This year, in addition to the \$500,000 to the Endowment already contracted to AFI (which is redistributed to film archives across the country), NEA gave an additional \$230,000 to create the Center for Film and Video Preservation, bringing the total to a hefty \$250,000. Media arts organizations living on Reaganite rations have to wonder: why is the money being spent this way?



Eric Roberts writes advice to the lovelorn in *Miss Lonelyhearts*, one of the successes of AFI's Independent Filmmakers Program.

The project is so important to the NEA that Firstenberg has agreed to give the new center its own board, which is to help raise some of the \$50 million Hodsoll estimates preservation ultimately requires. But given the problems AFI's own board is having raising money for its capital campaign, another board *within* the Institute—which must inevitably compete for contributions—is hardly what the AFI needs.

When asked about the potential competition between the boards, Firstenberg cheerfully declared, "I don't see any conflict." But an NEA administrator was more realistic. "It's a tricky situation. The present AFI board mostly consists of executives from the production side of the business. These people rarely stay in their positions for more than a few years. For the Center, we're hoping to get executives from the controlling corporations, the men at the top of places like MCA, who have a long-term interest in the preservation problem." (And no wonder. A recent *New York Times* article reported that studio film libraries are currently worth hundreds of millions of dollars.) Between paying for its real estate and raising \$50 million for preservation, AFI may well exhaust available funding sources without a cent reaching a living filmmaker—unless, of course, he or she is attending the AFI school.

To those who object that the Center will inevitably become a proxy for the industry, the NEA administrator replies, "There is no way preservation efforts can succeed unless Hollywood gets behind them." He points to the support the AFI has lent Anthology Film Archives in its efforts to preserve independent work and to the AFI collection of black films at

the Library of Congress. This may sound suspiciously like a "trickle-down" arrangement, but the administrator insists that "the NEA cannot provide money to serve all the varieties of film requiring preservation. We have to draw on the private sector."

The Center's director, Bob Rosen (currently on leave from the UCLA Archive) is aware of the independent film community's suspicions about the program. "I've taken a few swipes at the AFI myself in the past," he says. "There is a lot of sensitivity on this issue. But we're committed to preserving all kinds of images. We're not talking strictly about studios. We plan to do a touring program of preserved films which will definitely include independent pieces."

### INDIE INPUT?

Firstenberg echoes this conciliatory message to independents. There's been discussion about putting more independents on the board, she reports. (AFI's board members are selected from candidates proposed by its nominating committee.) "We've put it on the agenda. Within the year there will be other voices." The question is whether under current conditions they will have much effect; after all, there were three educators on the board when Education got the axe.

On the other hand, Jacobs claims that during his tenure on the board he lobbied successfully for the appointment of Peter Biskind (former editor of *Seven Days*) as editor of *American Film*, the AFI magazine which reaches 140,000 readers. While no one can mistake *American Film* for an "obscure, avant-garde journal dedicated to 16mm Czech cinema," as Charlton Heston put it in a recent membership solicitation letter, coverage of independents has visibly increased since Biskind took charge. During the Olympic Arts Festival scheduled for mid-July in Los Angeles, Television and Video Services is presenting a video exhibition curated by other southern California media institutions such as Long Beach and Cal Arts. Also during the Olympics, AFI has scheduled free private screenings of films ranging from Hollywood blockbusters to *Harlan County, U.S.A.* for the assembled athletes. Entertaining Olympic athletes may not be the most productive project a publicly funded national media organization can undertake. But it is unlikely that, five years ago, independent films would have been part of such a public relations package.

While some will be encouraged by AFI's talk of strengthening its ties to independents, cynics note that talk is cheap, and a \$6.5 million debt is the stuff that institutional priorities are made of. As long as the Union Bank keeps waiving those loan repayments, the Institute will probably survive. But it must re-examine its priorities. Independents need AFI to lend them visibility—through the pages of its magazine, through exhibition, and through audience education. And to give teeth to its claim that it promotes the "art of the moving image," AFI needs independents, too.

Debra Goldman is a freelance writer specializing in media issues.



## Festivals

# Montreal Nouveau: A Home for Indies

Kathleen Hulser

The Montreal International Festival of Nouveau Cinema is one of the most hospitable places for independents in North America. The city's mayor, Jean Drapeau, is a balding bundle of French-Canadian energy and corruption who has been in office for decades and ensures that money flows into cultural coffers. (Although when he doesn't like what he sees, he sends in the police: witness the police raid on the "Corridart" Olympic expo in 1976 which was knocked down because of the anti-gentrification art displayed.)

The Montreal fest has been around a dozen years, and 1983 was its largest edition yet. In addition to the 130 films of differing lengths, the video section offered some 100 tapes to the public in a congenial, barely converted screening room on Boulevard St. Laurent. St. Laurent is an Eastern European market street filled with shopping babushkas. Unlike the neighboring Prince Arthur area, St. Laurent hasn't fallen into terminal chicdom yet—as proof I cite the bearded thirtyish man in a Superman outfit with a cloak and a yarmulke who I encountered on my way to festival headquarters at 9:30 am.

Featured star of the 1983 event was Werner Schroeter, who occasionally descended from his poetic cloud to debate with the audience. At a tribute to director-cinematographer collaboration, Henri Alekan (aging French cameraman who has worked with everyone from Abel Gance to Raul Ruiz) talked in wry anecdotes. Luminary of the New German Cinema Thomas Mauch noted his dislike for precise scripts: "What orgasm was ever written on paper?" Women were notably absent on the panel of this sold-out presentation—but I bet Montreal feminists won't let festival directors Dimitri Epides and Claude Chamberlan forget it for next year.

On the other hand, women were quite visible on the screening schedule. One enterprising short feature—*A Real Man* by French-Chilean Valeria Sarmiento—took a sardonic tour of Latin American macho, revealing the insidious leaps from tenderness to romanticism to double-standards to domination. The features hailed from many continents and ethnicities: Lam-Le's *Dust of the Empire* (France-Vietnam), Charles Burnett's *My Brother's Wedding*, George Kuchar's *Cattle Mutilation* and Venezuelan John Petrizelli's *The Bewitching*. American indies were well-distributed throughout the program, from international features to the large "Nuclear" section. Participants included Lizzie Borden, Bette Gordon, Robert Mugge, Spike Lee, Susan Sontag, Howard Brookner and Mark Rance.

The Video Art section was especially noteworthy this year. The set-up in Cinema Parallele was both kind-of kitsch and kind-of comfortable. Chairs were spread not too deep in about five rows in front of a line of monitors mounted on fake columns in piles of sand (like the sawdust shavings on the floor of a butcher shop—what a fantasy!). The screenings were well-attended and held people's attention, quite an accomplishment in view of the widely varying interest level of the tapes. Luc Bourdon and Thrassyvoulos Giatsios did an excellent job of rounding up an international selection of videotapes. One big contributor was Time Based Arts from Amsterdam; one of its notable contributions was Paula Vanes' minimalist *20 Performances for Hands*, which worked a maximum effect with two fetchingly attired sets of fingers and some strangely miked soundtracks. Also interesting to an American viewer was a slick dance video art collaboration between Italian TV and Falso Movimento called *Tango Glaciale*, which crossed the style and moves of Twyla Tharp, Ping Chong and Robert Ashley. Also on hand was an extensive collection of tapes from The Kitchen and several conceptual/performance-oriented Japanese tapes. Nomination for the most unusual sub-category goes to

## INDEPENDENTS & SOUTH AFRICA

Independent filmmakers are currently being asked to enter their films in South Africa's Durban International Film Festival. Following is an excerpt from the African National Congress' policy on such participation, as expressed in a letter to St. Clair Bourne of Chamba Productions: "The apartheid system has been universally condemned as a crime against humanity. . . . While we are appreciative of the good intentions of groups like the Durban International Film Festival, we suggest non-participation in such programs because there can be no normal cultural interaction in an abnormal society. . . . If artists seek to profit from the system of inhuman oppression of the Black people of South Africa, they will not be allowed to benefit from the patronage of countries and peoples committed to the struggle against apartheid."

Greek video; curator Gatsios hails from Athens, where he organized the first-ever video art festival two years ago. All in all, the big video sidebar was an auspicious first.

The large press room with lunch tables on St. Laurent offered a daytime gathering place for festival participants. There were complaints that screening sites were too spread out, and Chamberlan says that the 1984 festival will probably be held in one multi-screen location. Last year the schedule was often juggled around at the last minute, with cancellations and delays galore. On the other hand, the press coverage is extensive, CBC radio ricks in with reviews and interviews and the crowds are young and appreciative.

There's been some tension between the two halves of the festival direction, and it's rumored that an altered structure in 1984 may result, but at press time we were unable to verify the details.



20 *Dialogues for Hands* from the Montreal film festival.

Courtesy Paula Vanes



Chamberlan says he will probably make a preview trip to New York in late June or early July. The festival will take place in late October this year, right after the close of the Independent Feature Market (Chamberlan says he hopes to bring some features and filmmakers directly from the IFP). Deadline for entry is July 15. All formats accepted. Apply to Epides or Chamberlan at 3724 Blvd. St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 2V8; (514) 843-4711.

—Kathleen Hulser

## Mannheim: Too Big for Britches

Maybe it's getting too big for its britches, but last year the International Mannheim Week was not what it used to be. The festival's 26-member, five-category jury results in a overdose of bureaucratic red tape, the administration is alienating, the quantity of the films disconcerting, and the assembly-line press conferences superficial. But despite this, almost everyone who's someone in the film world has won a prize at Mannheim. Even Walt Disney is listed on their roster. This kind of psychological domination is the fest's strongest asset, and they know it.

Mannheim can still afford to give substantial cash awards, a rarity in this age of gold-plated plaques. The Grand Prize (approximately \$4,000) is awarded to a first fiction film over 60 minutes, but the rest of the fest focuses on documentaries, with a strong emphasis on politics. But if you're into musicals or light stuff, forget it—although the National Film Board of Canada did manage to screen *The Shimmering Beast*, a feature on moose-hunting.

Americans are generally well-represented at Mannheim (in 1983, films were selected by New Time Films' Penny Bernstein). *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute* (Mirra Bank and Ellen Hovde), *The Secret Agent* (Jacki Ochs) and *Where Did You Get That Woman?* (Loretta Smith) were well-received, while *Freckled Rice* (Steve Ning) and *In Our Hands* (Robert Richter and Stanley Warnow) walked away with prizes worth about \$1,000 each. With the German anti-nuclear rally in Bonn coming up, *In Our Hands* proved to be an especially appropriate entry.

A rewarding offshoot of the sixties, when Mannheim was interested in American experimental films and animation, is the Josef von Sternberg award for "originality" (worth approximately \$1600). The films entered into this category are few and far between, but Ed Emshwiller, Karen Arthur, Richard Beymer, Sandy Moore and Jim Jarmusch all have this plaque on their walls. Last year, Larry Roberts and Diane Orr won the prize with *SL-1*, a hybrid documentary reconstructing the first nuclear reactor accident in Idaho.

Mannheim seems to be in its Teutonic Period. Although it has an attendance press list bordering on the colossal, closer scrutiny reveals that 80% of the publications are German. If you want a write-up in the *Rheinpfalz* or dream of



Steve Ning's film on growing up in Boston's Chinatown, *Freckled Rice*, was one of the prize-winners at Mannheim.

making sales to German TV stations ZDF, SDR, WDR, WWF, NDR or ARD, this is definitely the festival for you. There are plenty of other buyers walking around, but they aren't necessarily buying! One Dutch TV buyer was dropping into everything but found the quality "not up to TV standards." To sell, you have to stick around personally, but most US films were not represented by their producers. (Because of economic restrictions, Mannheim does not pay for transportation, but they do offer accommodations and \$15 per day.)

Mannheim's substitute for parties is the midnight press conference, held in a small room adjacent to a noisy beer hall. Most people divide their time between drinking and discussing. (*The Children from Himmlertown*, a film about the Nazis and Poles, ignited a heated one-hour debate.) The key to getting anything out of these rap sessions is to speak German, as this is the language of the fest. There is little effort to translate, thus alienating about one-third of the audience. When New York sound editor Margie Crimmins took to the podium to answer ques-

tions about *The Secret Agent*, a major concern expressed was that the film didn't make sense in German!

Best film from a Third World country is the latest addition to Mannheim's family of prizes. This \$5,000 prize is funded by the Federal Ministry of Economics for a film dealing with "hunger, poverty, or oppression capable of arousing the sensitivity of the German people toward the problems of the Third World." Films from Ecuador, Angola, Nicaragua, Martinique, Iran were screened daily.

Films not officially entered are often presented in one of the Information Programs. In 1983, UCLA showed a package of four films organized by Jorge Preloran which included his own *Quilino*, Frank de Palma's *Hibakusha Gallery*, Teresa Sparks' *The Composition* and Tony Shiff's *My Place*. Both Shiff and de Palma were touring Europe and came to the fest hoping to draw attention to their student productions. Shiff remained a bit skeptical and said he hadn't seen much of a "public" during the film week. But does this fest need a public? It already has too many people.

*Mannheim Film Week Director Fee Vaillant will make selections in New York through the FIVF Festival Bureau in August. Documentaries of any length and first fiction films over 60 minutes are eligible. For entry forms and regulations send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to FIVF/Mannheim, 625 Broadway, NY, NY 10012. Filmmakers must pay for shipment to and from New York, and all material will be due Aug. 10. If you wish to contact Mannheim directly: Stadt Mannheim, Filmwochenburo, Rathaus, E-5, 6800 Mannheim 1, West Germany; (0621) 293-27 45.*

—Jacqueline Leger

Jacqueline Leger is a filmmaker and journalist living in Switzerland. She is contributing a series of articles on European festivals to this column.

## Nyon: Smaller Is Better

October's alternative to the Mannheim Film Week is the International Film Festival of Nyon, which also specializes in documentaries. Nyon is a smaller event, in a smaller town, with a smaller budget. The result? It is better organized, the administration is accessible, and the screenings are limited. Your preference for either getting lost in a crowd or sticking out like a sore thumb should determine your festival choice. New York filmmaker Sheldon Rochlin chose Nyon for his film *Signals Through the Flames* because it was "a nice place to be." (He won an award in Mannheim in 1965 for his film *Vali*.) For a New Yorker, Nyon can be business plus vacation: it is a quiet 15 minutes from Geneva, and sports a small port and flower-decked quays.

The festival wakes up the town each year by introducing a wide range of documentary films, which it promotes as "an essential part of our society." It is run like a tight ship by Erika de Hadeln. Nyon and Mannheim are said to be



Grandma smiles for her boy's camera in Mark Rance's family verite *Death and the Singing Telegram*, at Nyon.



competitive, but they have little in common, although some films do sneak into both. De Hadeln's husband, Moritz, is the director of the Berlin Film Festival and acts as coordinator here, so one finds a type of "Berlin Connection," with films coming and going between the two fests.

Language is not a problem at Nyon. Even if only one person in the crowd doesn't speak French, a private translator is made available (in many cases Erika de Hadeln herself!). The press does not take on cattle market proportions in Nyon. Representatives of Swedish, Belgian and Swiss TV are present, and actively buy.

Films are chosen by a five-member jury. In keeping with the flavor of small-town life, there is also a public jury, made up of local townsfolk of all ages interested enough in film to raise money from local businesses to buy an additional prize. (It's touches like this that make Nyon attractive.) There are no cash awards, but a gold Sesterce and three silver Sesterces, usually divided into categories like ethnographic, newsreel or compilation films, are given. (A Sesterce is a Roman coin, originally made of silver and later of brass or copper.) The festival is run on a \$75,000 budget, so it's not too extravagant in its tastes. Filmmakers must pay transportation costs but three-night hotel accommodations are offered. There is no entry fee for films.

This year's overall theme was war. Long video projects like the National Film Board of Canada's seven-part *War* and WGBH's 13-part *Vietnam: A Television History* were shown, and there were many discussions on the political and social implications of these series. One may question whether these large super-budget productions (*War* cost \$2.5 million, while *Vietnam* cost \$5 million) belong in a competitive film festival where the majority of works are by low-budget producers, and the festival acknowledges this problem up to a point. US filmmaker Peter Entell, a jury member, said there was some conflict in giving prizes to productions that "don't need a launching." But this concern seemed short-lived. *War* won both a silver Sesterce and the public prize, although the gold award went to Australian Gary Kildea's 16mm *Celso and Cora*, a depiction of the simple daily life of a Philippine family.

In 1983, there were eight US entries in the 17-country line-up. The de Hadelns have eclectic tastes, and films from China, Senegal and Venezuela were shown. Although the couple serve as the entire selection committee, both Manfred Salzgeber and Gordon Hitchens serve as US consultants. *Tools for Research* (M. Carosello), *Five American Guns* (John Cosgrove), *Season of Thunder* (Jeff Chester), *Nicaragua: Report from the Front* (Deborah Shaffer and Tom Sigel) and *Seeing Red: Stories American Communists* (Julia Reichert and James Klein) were among the US entries. The only US winners were Marc Rance's *Death and the Singing Telegram*, a 114-minute family saga shot in cinema verite a la Leacock, and the *Vietnam* opus. Although these films couldn't be more polar, they do have one common element: time. *Vietnam* reportedly took six years to



Trapper Irvan Perez at work in the marshes in a scene from *Mosquitos and High Water* by Andrew Kolker and Louis Alvarez.

make, but Rance is running a close second, with five years work to his credit.

Like Mannheim, Nyon is for people interested in social and political issues rather than pure entertainment. When a local journalist interviewed passers-by about the Nyon films, many people responded that "they see this kind of thing on TV," indicating that the comfort of their own living rooms might be more hospitable to documentary viewing than a public space. But Nyon offers a chance for active communication, not only by showing films but also by debating their content, often for days.

*Festival Director Erika de Hadeln will select social issue documentaries in New York and Montreal in mid-July. For more information and entry forms, contact: Gordon Hitchens, 214 West 85th St, #3-W, NY NY 10024, (212) 877-6856. Direct entries due in Switzerland by Sept. Contact: Nyon Int'l FF, PO Box 98, CH-1260 Nyon, Switzerland; (022) 61.60.60. —JL*

## San Antonio Cinefest Grows

The Ninth San Antonio CineFestival (1984) is broadening its perspective by incorporating Latin American and Iberian cinema, while retaining its focus on Latino film and video produced in the United States. This year's festival will highlight vintage and contemporary alternative Mexican films, and analyze North American films which address Latino and Latin American themes. Formerly called the Chicano Film Festival, CineFestival has played an important role in fostering excellence and providing a forum and showcase for cinema and video relevant to Chicano and Latino issues both by Latino and non-Latino producers.

The festival has undergone many changes since its founder, Adan Medrano, left two years ago. CineFestival opened last year under the new directorship of Eduardo Diaz, a former television producer. The festival also moved from the sponsorship of Oblate College of the Southwest to the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center; it is hoped that this will increase the participation from the San Antonio Latino community.

"We intend to continue gearing the festival to the community, but we also need to target the East Coast, Latin America and Spain," said

Diaz. He started last year by holding a symposium to analyze the relationship between US Latino cinema and New Latin American cinema. The discussion culminated in the screening of Pastor Vega's *Retrato de Teresa* (*Portrait of Teresa*), one of Cuba's most popular films.

The festival has received an increasing number of entries from non-Latino producers. Last year, the festival featured a special presentation of the 1954 film classic *Salt of the Earth* by Paul Jarrico and other blacklisted filmmakers, along with *A Crime to Fit the Punishment*, co-produced by Barbara Moss and Steve Mack, which addresses the political issues raised by the production of *Salt of the Earth*.

Diaz is considering making the presently non-competitive festival a juried competition, and encouraging distributors, television program directors and academics to attend. But CineFestival has no difficulty attracting entries, the public or the press. As the only ongoing American Latino festival other than the Latino Film and Video Festival in New York, it has received national press coverage in such publications as *Variety*, *Broadcasting* and *Nuestro*.

However, the festival has been criticized for its dearth of new material. For example, *Chicana*, a film produced by Sylvia Morales, was shown at CineFestival four years ago and again last year. Morales attributes this lack of new productions to the financial difficulties of independent producers. But, she adds, "I also think that [last year] there was a lot of new work in production, and we will be seeing it at the festival this year."

Diaz, whom the San Antonio press has labeled as "clearly an activist," has been accused of giving the festival a left-wing orientation, as represented by such films as *Sandino Lives* (Ronald Saucii) and *Portrait of Teresa*. "The problem," countered Diaz, "is a lack of understanding of the New Latin American cinema, and [those who do] not recognize its impact."

Features, documentaries, shorts, animation, television news, public affairs and performance films are accepted. Formats include 16mm, Super-8, 8mm, 1/2" and 3/4". Entry fee is \$15; deadline for entries is July 20.

This year, the festival is expanding to five days (August 24-28) in order to handle the increasing number of entries and to better feature selected films, symposia and a film poster exhibit. For information contact Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1300 Guadalupe St., San Antonio TX 78207; (512) 271-3151.

—Maria T. Rojas

*Maria T. Rojas is an independent producer and journalist from New Jersey and is now working with the Latino TV Broadcasting Service, Inc. in New York.*

## New York Film Festival: The Big Time

The New York Film Festival is synonymous with the big time in US festivals, and for the few independents who make it in, the rewards of at-





A scene from Eagle Pennell's *Last Night at the Alamo*.

tention and subsequent distribution can be immediate and dramatic. The large size of the hall at Lincoln Center is only one of the many factors which encourages the festival to lean toward prudent programming choices, but the number of films presented (usually 25-30) allows occasional interesting glimpses of the international and domestic scene.

In 1983, Julia Reichert and James Klein's *Seeing Red*, a documentary about America's cuddly commies of the 1930s, was the first film to sell out—demonstrating that a documentary with a hot subject matter can draw crowds as well as the old stand-by European directors favored by festival director Richard Roud do. Another documentary, Howard Brookner's *Burroughs*, attracted a lunatic fringe which usually doesn't frequent the sacred halls of Alice Tully.

In one way, the NYFF has bucked recent trends: it's selected more independent documentaries (six last year) than independent fiction features (only *Last Night at the Alamo* by Eagle Pennell made it). Just to prove how confused it is about what constitutes popular culture, the festival committee programmed Chantal Akerman's *The Golden Eighties* at midnight. This avant-garde musical pastiche of grand exits and entries is about as far from a midnight movie as I

could imagine, but it did turn out to be an amusing and idiosyncratic effort that would have been more coherent if programmed as a sequel to Akerman's *Toute Une Nuit*, an episodic collage of truncated romances. Other foreign fare

of interest included Souleymane Cisse's *The Wind*, which dealt with the misguided values of contemporary Malian youth; Mani Kaul's *Dhrupad*, a wonderful and mysterious documentary from India about the origins of classical raga; and the Canadian tongue-in-cheek reflection on ethnocentricity, *Sifted Evidence* by Patricia Gruben.

As an established festival with a seemingly eternal director, the event never changes direction radically. Over the last four years, the number of American independents has increased, particularly in the documentary category. The proportion of intriguing Third World fare remains slim (three last year), and it's regrettable that a festival heavily supported through tax dollars sees fit to program the top-grossing *The Big Chill*, a *Secaucus Seven* remake from Columbia Pictures, instead of devoting its precious slots to rarer birds.

This year's programming committee consists of Roud, Richard Corliss, David Thomson, J. Hoberman and newcomer Molly Haskell. Lawrence Sapadin is the new advisor on independents. Applications are available from Joanne Koch at The Film Society of Lincoln Center, 140 West 65th St., NY NY 10023; (212) 877-1800, ext. 489. 16mm and 35mm films accepted; must be US premiere. Deadline for features: July 15. The 22nd Festival will unspool Sept. 28-Oct. 14, 1984. —KH■

**WA**

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## Bye-Bye Wendy

We wish the best of luck to Wendy Lidell, who left the staff of AIVF in May to do freelance media consulting and production. Wendy is a three-year veteran here, and her work as assistant director cum festival bureau chief and business manager has contributed to AIVF's dramatic growth during her tenure.

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## In Brief

This month's festivals have been compiled by Deborah Erickson and Wendy Lidell with the help of the FIVF files. **Listings do not constitute an endorsement**, and since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

## Domestic

● **BUMBERSHOOT INVITATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, August 31-September 3, is an appropriately named event: "Bumbershoot" means umbrella, & festival takes place during Northwest's infamous rainy season. Residents of WA, OR, ID, AK & British Columbia invited to send any 16mm or 35mm film, to be screened as part of the Seattle Arts Festival. Festival is popular, & well-publicized in *Seattle Times*. Emphasis is on art & experimental work. Selected filmmakers receive rental fee of \$3.50 per minute. No entry fee; filmmakers pay return postage. Deadline: August 6. Contact: Chris Curtis, BFF, 2414 Second Ave., Seattle WA 98121; (206) 632-0243.

● **COLUMBUS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, November 2 & 3, now in its 32nd year, is a well-established, well-run event. Hefty entry fees (\$65 to \$200) guarantee each filmmaker at least an honorable mention & an impressive-looking plaque, but the abundance of these non-competitive mentions (almost 400 were given out last year) makes them meaningless beyond how they look on your wall. All submissions are judged in 1 of 9 categories: art & culture, business & industry, education, health & medicine, religion & ethics, social studies, travel (US & foreign, videotapes, promotional materials for films). 16mm films & TV spot announcements, 3/4" videotapes & promotional material for films eligible. No 35mm entires. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Patty Cary, Film Council of Greater Columbus, PO Box 2335, Columbus OH 43216; (614) 228-5613.

● **EXPOSE YOURSELF FILM FESTIVAL**, September. Held in a popular DC theater: an opportunity for audience exposure. The shorter the work, the better its chance of being shown, as films are packaged for a standard 2-hr. time slot. 4 different audiences view the package of films: winners are determined by "human applause meters." 1st prize: \$50; 2nd & 3rd: \$25 each. Entry restricted to MD, VA & DC residents. 16mm only; 25 mins. max. No entry fee. Deadline: August. Contact: Jeffrey Hyde, Biograph Theatre Group, 2819 M St. NW, Washington, DC 20007; (202) 338-0707.

● **INTERNATIONAL SKI FILM FESTIVAL**, September 24-28. The thrill of victory, the agony of defeat—sponsored by Salem Lights. 16 & 35mm films judged in 4 categories: Resort & Travel, Racing & Competition, Instruction & Technique, Special Skiing. New category: Videotape. Attendance by invitation only; competitors mostly ski industry-commissioned media. 1983 Silver Ski award for best film went to *Ski Espace* by Thierry Goor of Pro Video, Belgium. This 11th fest should reflect lots of Winter Olympics action. Current productions under 60 min. accepted; no works publicly screened prior to fest. Entry fee: \$125 per category. Deadline: September 15. Contact: Donna Cooper, Jerry Simon Associates, 819 Madison Ave., NY NY 10021; (212) 570-1950.



● **NORTHWEST FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, August 10-19, is sponsored by the Northwest Film Study Center of the Portland Art Association. Residents of OR, WA, AK, ID, MT & British Columbia invited to send work in film, video or multi-image. Prizes average \$150 in cash or local lab credit, totaling \$1500. Most entries are shorts averaging 7 minutes. Entries are divided in 8-10 groups for presentation to 2500 viewers over 10 days. There are no subject categories. Winners are chosen on the basis of "originality, entertainment value, visual appeal, etc." Last year's judge was Melinda Ward of the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis; 1982 judge was J. Hoberman, *Village Voice* film critic. Winning works go on touring program of media art centers, film societies & colleges; winners get 60% of modest rental fees for the tour's 20-24 showings. No entry fee. Deadline: July 15. Judging: July 15-31. Contact: Bill Foster or Chuck Bischoff, NW Film Study Center, Portland Art Association, 1219 SW Park Ave., Portland OR 97205; (503)221-1156.

The Contemporary Arts Center



Joan Churchill and Nick Bloomfield's *Chicken Ranch* was one of the documentary features at the Deauville festival.

● **SAN MATEO COUNTRY FAIR FAIRWORLD FESTIVAL**, July 20-29, screens films & videotapes as part of a larger multi-arts festival. No "professionally-funded" entries accepted. No classifications for film; 4 video categories: documentary, public affairs, industrial & entertainment/art. Art fair attendance is said to be near 200,000. 16mm, S-8 and ¾" eligible. Cash, trophies & local lab credit awarded. Entry fee: under \$10. Deadline: July 8. Contact: Lois Kelley, San Mateo County Fair, PO Box 1027, San Mateo CA 94403; (415) 574-FAIR.

● **TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL**, August 30-September 3. Almost everyone agrees that Telluride is very important. More theater owners and distributors are attending, & for an event that doesn't call itself a market, there is quite a lot of informal business reportedly taking place. American indie cinema was the focus of special programming last year; the fest hosted the American premieres of *El Norte* (Greg Nava), *SL-1* (Diane Orr & Larry Roberts), *Signal 7* (Rob Nilsson), *Testament* (Lynn Littman), *Last Night at the Alamo* (Eagle Pennell), *Seeing Red* (Julia Reichert & James Klein), *In Heaven There Is No Beer?* (Les Blank) & *Remains To Be Seen* (Jane Aaron). In addition, Irwin Young, president of Du Art Labs, was honored for his financial & moral support of this new American cinema. Young pointed out that the festival has served as an invaluable launching pad for many films. Although the press agrees not to review specific films, which allows them to show later at the New York Film Festival (a route travelled last year by *Seeing Red*, *Last Night at the Alamo* & Andrei Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia*), there is apparently a great deal of "word of mouth" within the industry which can make or break a film. While Telluride has been growing in both size & prestige over the years, it may finally have reached the breaking point in terms of its idyllic but perhaps too-small location. Festival passes at \$190 sell out well before the event, but filmmakers with films in the fest have complained that they were not given tickets to all the shows. A hierarchy is imposed in other ways as well: narrative features are preferred over shorts & documentaries, but this may be a reflection of historical audience preference, not an aesthetic choice of the festival administration. Another complaint was the poor quality of the projection in the screening facility where the 16mm films were shown. Still, festival directors Bill & Stella Pence have built an atmosphere at Telluride where new films truly do get launched. Enter shorts, docs & features in June, July, & Aug. Contact: TFF, National Film Preserve, 119 W. Colorado Ave., Telluride CO 81345; (303) 728-4401. ■

## Foreign

● **FESTIVAL OF ARCHITECTURE & URBAN LANDSCAPE FILMS & TAPES**, October 12-21, conducts competition for films & tapes dealing with both social & physical aspects of the urban landscape. Their broad interpretation of urban environment includes works as diverse as documentaries on gentrification & fiction features such as Bernardo Bertolucci's *Spider's Stragem* & John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy*. Screenings accompanied by related seminars & art exhibits at the "Wool Warehouse" in Bordeaux. Fiction & documentary films in 16 & 35mm, & tapes in ¾" U-matic (PAL, SECAM or NTSC) invited: max length: 60 min. Entry forms available from FIVE, or contact: Nicole Ducourea or Annie Forgia, F.I.F. ARC, Centre D'Art et Communication, Entrepot Laine, 3 Rue Ferrere, 33000 Bordeaux, France; (56) 44.50.13 or 44.51.19.

● **BERLIN**, February. While still 8 months away, festival director Moritz de Hadeln makes his first trip to the US in July with wife Erika (who is making selections for the Nyon Documentary Festival). De Hadeln programs main competition in Berlin, & is therefore interested in larger budget films & prefers 35mm. Last year Manfred Salzgeber accompanied him to look at "smaller" films for information programs, & he'll likely be back this year. For more information, contact: Gordon Hitchens, 214 W. 85th St. #3-W, NY NY 10024; (212) 877-6856.

● **CARTHAGE FESTIVAL OF ARAB & AFRICAN FILMS**, October. The Tunisian Ministry of Culture sponsors this biennial fest at the northern tip of Africa. 25 Arabian & African countries vied for gold, silver & bronze Tanits (main prizes) in 1982. Other countries represented in sidebars & panels. *Missing* by Constantine Costa-Gavras and the ubiquitous *E.T.* were among the US features. Fest hopes to operate increasingly as an int'l market. Could be good for American minority & 3rd World works. Fest provides plush accommodations. Contact: Director, Carthage Int'l Film Festival, Journees Cinematographiques de Carthage, BP 1029, Tunis, Tunisia.

● **DEAUVILLE FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN CINEMA**, Aug. 31-Sept. 9, will combine this year's 10th year celebration with the 40th anniversary celebration of the American landing on coast of Normandy & liberation of Paris. Deauville is geared mainly toward Hollywood movies, which use this popular beach resort for glittery premieres to kick off French

theatrical runs. Fest is open to independents, however; last year's selection included *City News* (David Fishelson and Zoe Zinman), *Mission Hill* (Bob Jones), *Vortex* (Scott & Beth B), & documentary features *Chicken Ranch* (Joan Churchill & Nick Broomfield), *Don't Look Back* (D.A. Pennebaker) & *Say Amen, Somebody* (George T. Nierenberg). Nierenberg agreed with Deauville participants from previous years that intimate atmosphere facilitates meeting industry insiders, but unless your film is sub-titled in French, few French will see it. He also added that 16mm projection facilities are second-rate. Features receive more attention than documentaries, & all independents are pitted against big-budget organizations complete with celebrities & press agents, which makes getting press attention a challenge. Fiction & documentary features are accepted in 16 & 35mm; selections made throughout July & August by Ruda Dauphin, who can be contacted at 401 E. 80th St., #28-H, NY NY 10021; (212) 737-5040. In France contact: Lionel Couchan or Martine Jouando, Promo 2000, 33 ave MacMahon, 75017 Paris, France.

● **FIGUEIRA DA FOZ**, September, is a major forum for new art cinema from around the world; people from Lisbon flock to this charming seaside resort town to see films & meet filmmakers. James Klein (*Seeing Red*) who attended the fest in 1983 with Julia Reichert for a retrospective of their films, reports fest is one of the best for meeting filmmakers & viewing a body of good progressive films. But lurking behind the fest's good intentions is an underfunded festival administration that has been drawing the same complaints from American filmmakers for years: confusion about changed screening slots, no reimbursements for travel & shipment as promised, & delayed print returns & correspondence. However, same filmmakers agree that they had a great time. Fest's catalog is a massive review of what's new in cinema with pages allocated to each of about 100 films and their makers. Although not a commercially important event, there are often scouts from other festivals. Festival director Jose Vieira Marques is seeking only features over 50-60 min. this year; although program is overwhelmingly fiction, documentaries are accorded equal billing. *Seeing Red* won last year's Silver Plaque; other American films in 1983 included *In the King of Prussia* (Emile de Antonio), *Dan's Motel* (Jerry Barrish), *48 Hours* (Walter Hill) & *Smithereens* (Susan Seidelman). Marques scouts festivals such as Rotterdam, Berlin & Mannheim to make selections & accepts entries through Sept., although they are preferred by July 31. It is recommended that, if chosen, you attend festival with your film so you can hand-carry it; since not all trips can be paid on the festival's meager budget, you should get your ticket in advance if that's the only way you can afford to attend. Contact: J.V. Marques, Festival Int'l de Cinema, Figueira da Foz, Apartado 5407, 1700 Lisbon Codex, Portugal.

● **GUILDE EUROPEENE DU RAID** is a French organization which promotes the spirit of adventure in youth through a variety of programs including 4 annual film festivals. Approaching soon are the Sport Int'l Film Fest in Montpellier (Sept. 27-Oct. 1) and Int'l Film Fest About the Sea in Dinard (Aug. 27-Sept. 2). The *First Int'l Hang Gliding Competition* at Pico (Francis Freedland) and *There Was Always Sun Shining Somewhere* (Craig Davidson) have already been invited to Montpellier, and *The Navigators* (Sanford H. Low) has been invited to Dinard. They are still looking for more films. Their other festivals cover themes including skiing, mountain-climbing and general "real-life adventure." Contact: Michel Auffray or Sylvie Barbe, Guilde Europeene du Raid, 11 rue de Vaugirard, 75006 Paris, France; (1) 326.97.52.



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Courtesy Filmmaker



1935 Champions of the Negro National Baseball League from *There Was Always Sunshine* by Craig Davidson.

• **MARSEILLES INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FILM FESTIVAL**, October (tentative). This competitive festival debuted last year, with each participating country represented by 1 film. Jury members included novelist Jean-Francois Josselin, actress Eva Darlan, & sculptor Cesar (designer of the French Academy Award figurine). The American entry was David Irving's *Goodbye, Cruel World*. Grand prize went to a Polish film, *Vabank*. Contact: Festival International du Film Comique, Office Regional de la Culture, 50 Rue de Breteuil, 13006 Marseilles, France.

• **MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL**, August 16-27. Except for *Liquid Sky* by Slava Tsuckerman, which won a Special Jury Prize in 1982, no American films have been admitted to the feature competition in this fest for the last 3 years. Even out-of-competition US entries are difficult to find, & most hail from Hollywood. The Festival du Nouveau Cinema in Montreal, held later in the year, is smaller, but much more receptive to independent work. On the other hand, Montreal World is a large, commercial festival which attracts film professionals from all over the world. There is reportedly a good deal of business activity; a special market section was added a couple of years ago. But even commercial aspirations might be better served in Canada by the Toronto Festival (Sept. 6-16), which is also far more receptive to American independent work than Montreal World. Montreal also includes a shorts competition. Deadline for entry: July 15. Contact: Serge Losique, Director, World Film Festival, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3G 1M8; (514) 879-4057/7285; telex: 05-25472 Wofilmfest.

• **PRIX ITALIA FESTIVAL**, September. Established in 1948, open only to radio & television organizations already members of Prix Italia. Fest claimed 52 orgs. representing 36 countries in 1982. No preselection of tapes, which must be submitted through a member organization. Format accepted is VTR 2" (PAL, SECAM, NTSC). Entry fee: approx. 1,500 Swiss francs. Deadline: August. Contact: Dr. Alvis Zorz, Secretary General, c/o Radiotelevisione Italia, Viale Mazzini 14, 00195 Rome, Italy; 06-3686.

• **SITGES INT'L FANTASY & HORROR FILM FESTIVAL**, October. 17th scare-fest in this chic coastal town just south of Barcelona presents 35mm

films spoken or dubbed in French or Spanish. 1983's \$120,000 budget provided by Catalan provincial authority, which appears to be gung-ho on cultural events. Last year's US reps included *House on Sorority Row* by Mark Rosman and *The Coming* by Bert I. Gordon. Medals awarded. No fee; fest pays return postage. Deadline: August. Contact: Joan Luis Goas, Sitges Foto Film, Calle San Isidro 12, Post Box 93, Sitges, Spain; 93-894-1306.

• **INT'L FESTIVAL OF SPORTS & TOURISTS FILMS, KRANJ, YUGOSLAVIA**, October. Categories: Documentary, Animation, Educational (all max. 60 mins.) & Features, max. 120 mins. Films accepted in 16, 35 & 70mm; complete script must be available. International jury awards 3 best. Deadline: August 15. Contact: Interfilm Festival, Zrinkjskega 9, 61000 Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

• **TAORMINA INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, July 21-31. 30th annual event in this Sicilian resort town; 2nd year for popular American Film Week. US films screened last year included *War Games*, *Octopussy*, *48 Hours* & *Angelo, My Love*. Final-night gala in Greco-Roman amphitheater for awards presentation. Gold, silver & bronze Charybdis for best films, 3 Polyphemus Masks for best performances. Deadline: ASAP. Contact: Festival delle Nazioni Taormina, Via Calabria, Isol. 301-BIS, Ente Provinciale del Turismo, Messina, Italy, OR: Director Guglielmo Biraghi, Via P.S. Mancini #12, Roma, Italy.

• **VANCOUVER INT'L FILM FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**, October (tentative). Fest founder & director Bahman Farmanara says event will take place this year despite heavy financial losses since 1982 inception. (Farmanara worked closely with the Tehran kidfest in his homeland before emigrating to Canada in 1979.) The fest has suffered under Canadian educational cutbacks—no kiddie field trips means empty theaters for weekday afternoon screenings, while evening showings have proved past bedtime or inconvenient for parents. Market aspect may induce indies—Disney cable TV has bought product here. Contact: Bahman Farmanara, 340 Brookbank Ave., North Vancouver BC, V7J2C1; (604) 980-7933.

• **VEVEY INT'L COMEDY FESTIVAL**, August, is held in honor of Charlie Chaplin, who lived in this



area of Switzerland for nearly 20 years. Now in its 4th year, festival seeks 10 humorous or ironic films for competition from a minimum of 7 countries—this leaves only 3 possible places for US entries. Unfortunately, all entries must be sub-titled in French. However, Festival director Iris Brose expresses interest in independents, & is looking for funds to sponsor some projects. Competition for shorts (1-17 mins.) holds better possibilities for indies. Kodak-sponsored shorts prize of \$1000 in 16mm stock & processing is more practical than the festival's grand prize, the Golden Cane. Last year first prize went to Fred Schepisi for his comical cowboy adventure, *Barbarosa*; Bob Rogers took the shorts prize with *Ballet Robotique* (7 min., 16mm, color). The fest would like to remind filmmakers everywhere that it is still quite young, & may soon be able to give independents a better chance. Watch this column for updates. Deadline: July 1. Contact: Festival du Film, Place de la Gare 5, CH-1800 Vevey, Switzerland; (021) 518282; Telex 451143.

● **INT'L YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL**, October 6-14, promotes films concerning lives & problems of young people & works by young filmmakers. The fest's 4 non-competitive sections are: youth themes, first productions, retrospective of first productions, & open section wherein young filmmakers show & discuss

## New Humanities Deadline: JULY 30

The next deadline for NEH Media Programs is July 30. Although the NEH is currently stressing the "Masterworks" Program, NEH officer Don Gibson stresses that other projects are welcome, and that the NEH has "no definite kind of work in mind." The Masterworks concept, Gibson said, encompasses "important work in any area of the humanities. It is incumbent upon the applicant to demonstrate its significance." Contact:

**NEH Media Programs**  
Mail Stop 403  
806 15th St. NW  
Washington DC 20506  
(202) 724-0297

their non-commercial films. Festival covers all expenses for those admitted to first 3 sections, & provides accommodations & restaurant service for open section participants. Entrants pay shipment to Turin, fest pays return 15 days after closing. Deadline: August 15. Contact: Festivale Internazionale Cinema Giovani, Attn: Gianni Vattimo, en de Provinciale del Turismo, Via Roma 222, Turin, Italy. ■



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ADRIENNE WEISS

## The Independent's Lexicon

Eric Breitbart

Film and videomakers are primarily concerned with images. Words, however, are still needed for such mundane tasks as communicating with friends, family and co-workers, as well as for writing grant proposals. Like other crafts, film and video has its own technical jargon—the verbal shorthand that excludes outsiders—a supply of words and phrases with distinct meanings for those "in the know." For what I hope will be an ongoing column in *The Independent*, I'll define some terms all independents should be familiar with. This list is not complete; additional and regional variants are welcomed.

**advisor** A(n) (un)necessary appendage for humanities grant proposals.

**answer print** The copy of a film that asks all the questions.

**feinschmecker** (Yiddishism) Perfectionist. Became obsolete in the mid-1970's.

**independent** An individual removed from money and power, but dependent on those who have it.

**window** An opening on to a market. Often, though, something that closes on your neck when you get your head through it.

**blue sky** Unlimited opportunity. Or: what you see through a window before it slams shut.

**proposal** A document that gets you what you want by telling people what they want to hear.

**zoom d'ennui** A change of focal length for no reason other than camera operator boredom.

**piece of cake** An easy job with no problems. Or: just the opposite.

**fix it in the mix** (Producersese) Translation: I don't want to deal with this. Let the editor worry about it.

**check is in the mail** (Producersese) Translation: Don't bother me. I'll pay when I feel like it.

**I know how to look at rushes** (Producersese) Translation: I've never worked on a film before, but I'll be damned if I'll let you know it.

**verbal contract** An agreement as valuable as the paper it's written on.

**broadcast quality** What your work isn't when you go to sell it to television.

**dub** A video copy, as in "rub-a-dub-dub."

**production value** (Producersese) Translation: We're only paying you \$30,000 to do this, but we want everyone to think we paid you \$100,000.

**What's this in reference to?** (Telephone-ism of the 1980s) Answers to this question should probably be the subject of a separate column. For suggestions, see Rube Goldberg's "Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions." ■

Eric Breitbart is an independent producer and a former AIVF board member.

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## In & Out of Production

### Mary Guzzy

Summer 1984 is approaching and—like you—we're gearing up for the Summer Olympics and those zany, fun-filled political conventions. Always on the job, independent media producers continue to present fresh perspectives on serious issues often obscured by the elaborate campaign promises and other political shenanigans that have come to be predictable in an election year.

### TOPICAL TAKES

Examining the conflict in Central America through the eyes of North Americans who are living in Nicaragua is the focus of *Waiting for the Invasion: U.S. Citizens in Nicaragua*. Produced by Dee Dee Halleck and directed by Karen Ranucci, the 27-minute tape reveals many complex sides of the American civilian presence in Nicaragua by zeroing in on a diverse selection of people, from the US Ambassador to the regional director of a large US corporation to three Americans who work directly for the Sandinista government. *Waiting for the Invasion* was aired in March on public television's "Presente" series. It was shot by Skip Blumberg; other members of the project included Joan Braderman, Joel Kovel and Eddie Becker of Public Interest Video Network.

Recently, Halleck, Bob Summers and Penee Bender were awarded a New York Council on the Humanities grant to begin research on an archival film tentatively titled *Películas*, which will explore the role of the US in Central America and the Caribbean from 1900 to 1940. Initially, the project will produce an annotated filmography to be made available to researchers and filmmakers.

The filmmakers are currently seeking film footage that was shot in or concerns Latin America in that 40-year period. Anyone who can provide such footage or information leading to it can contact the Latin American Archives Project, 161 West 91 St., NY NY 10024.

Public Media Incorporated of New York has released Bill Jersey's *In Our Defense*, a 26-minute color documentary which examines the contradiction inherent in America's quest for security through massive stockpiling of nuclear weapons while allowing rising inflation and unemployment to threaten its citizens at home. Using the words of major US military, business and labor leaders, *In Our Defense* is an indictment of the war economy and a call for a re-emphasis on human life. The film was produced for the Foundation for the Arts of Peace and won a Silver Award at the Houston Film Festival and Honorable Mention at the Global Village Documentary Festival.

From the Public Interest Video Network of Washington, DC come two new releases.

*New Voices*, produced by Arlen Slobodow, is a 20-minute videotape about how non-profit groups are learning to utilize emerging technologies to reach the public and compete in the "marketplace of ideas." Aimed at directors of organizations which have not yet gained effective access to that marketplace and at general audiences, *New Voices* illustrates TV's ever-increasing clout in shaping our views and perceptions.

On the lighter side, PIVN has also released *La Cage Aux Public Interest Follies*, a satire on the public interest community and its constant adversary, the government. *La Cage* was produced by Eddie Becker.

Chris Spotted Eagle sends word from Minneapolis that his half-hour documentary, *Our Sacred Land*, is in postproduction and will tentatively be aired August 5 on WNET-13 New York. The film is a study of the Black Hills (Paha Sapa) and Bear Butte (Mato Paha) from the point of view of the Cheyenne and Sioux peoples, who consider these places sacred. *Our Sacred Land* illustrates how tourism, industry and mining—aspects of the dominant Western culture—threaten the existence of these sites.

Spotted Eagle's other recent work, *The Great Spirit Within the Hole*, was screened in April at INPUT '84 in Charleston SC, and has been nominated for an Emmy Award in the category of Outstanding Informational Special. The one-hour documentary focuses on spiritual survival of American Indians in US prisons. *Great Spirit Within the Hole* will also be screened on WNET this fall as part of the Friday night series, "Native Americans."

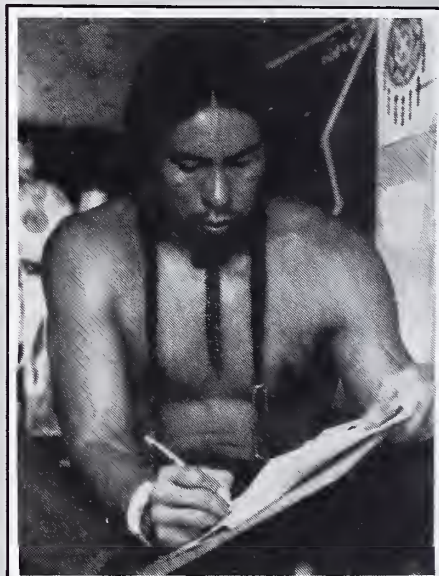
Adding a historical perspective, producers Jerry Lombardi, Jeremy Brecher and Jan Stackhouse of the Brass Workers History Project have completed postproduction on a

video documentary focusing on the copper and brass industry in the Connecticut industrial river valley. *Brass Valley* traces three generations of workers, examining their relationship with plant owners from World War I to the 1980s. The piece raises points about the effectiveness of worker organizations in various political and economic climates. *Brass Valley* is 86 minutes long and available in all video formats and in a series form. Temple Press has published the Project's 300-page illustrated book of the same title. The Brass Workers History Project was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Connecticut Humanities Council, the United Auto Workers and the Haymarket People's Fund.

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW DEPT.

AIVF members who recall the boundless wit and energy of past AIVF program coordinator John Greyson will be interested to know that Greyson, Mary Anne Yanulis and Eric Shultz have completed and released a 35-minute color video documentary, *Manzana Por Manzana: Defending Reconstruction in Nicaragua*. During the summer of 1983, Greyson and Yanulis lived at a Nicaraguan school and interviewed farmers, local representatives from mass organizations and organizers of the reconstruction movement. What emerges in classic documentary style is a picture of the Nicaraguan people in solidarity with the Sandinista government, prepared to defend their freedom against the US-backed contras.

Greyson reports that he and Yanulis spent the first six weeks of their stay in Nicaragua talking with community members before they began shooting. They found that people were eager for the opportunity to tell their story to North Americans. Nicaraguans do not perceive the Central American policies of the US government as representative of the



From *The Great Spirit Within the Hole* and *Our Sacred Land*, two new films by director Chris Spotted Eagle.

Courtesy Filmmaker





Courtesy Filmmaker

James Russo as the troubled Richard struggling to confront his sado-masochistic obsession in John Foster's *X-Ray*.

attitudes of the majority of Americans, according to Greyson.

*Manzana Por Manzana* ("Block by Block") explores agricultural reform, the literacy campaign, the role of women and other priority issues confronting Nicaraguans. The tape is available in Spanish or English on VHS or Beta, and is distributed in the US by Icarus Films.

Meanwhile, our current program director, the witty and energetic Isaac Jackson, premiered his video-in-progress *Fine Tuning for Flesh Tones* on April 7 in the Uptown/Downtown Festival at the Kitchen and the Harlem State Office Building. The seven-minute color tape will be completed at the Experimental TV Center in June and entered in the San Francisco Gay/Lesbian Film Festival. Jackson describes his work as an "image-processed study of the black male image in electronic media" which seeks to "dispel unpleasant myths by placing that image within (video) art history." The title *Fine Tuning for Flesh Tones* is derived from the idea that most people adjust their color televisions to get natural "white" skin tones. The images in this poetic, non-narrative work are based on found materials and Jackson's own paintings and collages, accompanied by an original score composed by Jackson on an electronic synthesizer. After completing *Fine Tuning*, Jackson hopes to produce an installation piece on the same theme.

Not resting on their laurels, Allen and Cynthia Mondell (*West of Hester Street*) have complete a 15-minute educational film aimed at elementary and junior high school students. *The Henderson Avenue Bug Patrol* takes audiences on an afternoon's exploration with six streetwise kids who abandon their video games to discover the excitement of nature in their own neighborhood, guided by a naturalist friend. The film's crew included cinematographer Jim Murray and soundman Skip Frazee. Bart Weiss was the editor and the musical score was composed by Phil Kelly. The kids and the naturalist appearing in the film are all neighbors of the film-

makers. Major funding for *The Henderson Avenue Bug Patrol* came from the Meadows Foundation, Mobil, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Arts Commission and the City Arts Program of the City of Dallas Parks and Recreation Department.

Other indies are responding to the need for young people's programming. *Coming of Age* by Josh Hanig (*Men's Lives*) and Dennis Hicks is a one-hour documentary which explores the attitudes of contemporary urban teenagers. Filmed during a week-long conference/retreat sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, *Coming of Age* is a straightforward document of the intense discussions on sexuality, relationships, racial identity, religion and family dynamics which occurred among the participants. The group of 200 teenagers included a cross-section of racial and social backgrounds, ranging from gang members to class presidents, all sharing the common experience of struggling to pass from adolescence to adulthood. Following its premiere at the 1982 New York Film Festival, *Coming of Age* received a number of festival awards including the American Film Festival Blue Ribbon, and was aired on WNET-13 in New York on May 11. It is distributed through New Day Films.

#### THIS MONTH'S HOT CONCEPT

Now and then a movie comes along which really spices up the day. Here at last is the movie that answers the question: Is chili a sexual stimulant? Currently bearing the working title *The New Mexico Chili Film*, this project produced by Pachito Lane of Earthworm Films is scheduled for completion in 1985. The film promises to be a visual and informational bonanza for chili lovers, including a sequence in which a skier traverses the

pristine slopes of a New Mexico mountain dressed as a red chili while other skiers dine on green chili stew.

Producer Lane has been travelling through the state of New Mexico collecting chili folklore from three cultures—Mexican-Indian, Spanish and Anglo—tracing the history of New Mexican chili cuisine from its pueblo origins to its current chic status. The 55-minute color 16mm film, tailored for television broadcast, will depict with minimal narration the tradition and contemporary uses of chili in cooking, ritual and art, as well as the harvesting and processing of chili and the devoted praise of many well-known chili lovers. Production monies for the film have been provided in part by the New Mexico Arts Division; further funding sought. Lane is being assisted in production by Jane Young and Richard Hooker. His future plans include two more films on chili—one focusing on Texas, the other on Mexico.

#### NO SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

In the narrative department, John Foster (*Presidential Address*) has completed a second effort with the aid of an American Film Institute Independent Filmmaker's grant. *X-Ray* depicts the inner and outer journey of troubled young man struggling to confront his sado-masochistic obsessions. On a trip to an isolated Canadian island, he is haunted by violent dreamlike images from his childhood and from a relationship with an X-ray technician whom he believes is trying to "see through" him. *X-Ray* was filmed in 16mm color and runs 33 minutes.

*Note:* Contact persons, addresses and phone numbers for all films mention in In and Out of Production are available at the AIVF office. ■

Courtesy WNET



Aired on June 13 on WNET-13's Independent Focus series, *Hush Haggles Hush: Tom Johnson's Praying Pigs* is a wacky documentary by Judy Pelsner and Bill Ferris.



## Notices

Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others included as space permits. Send Notices to THE INDEPENDENT, c/o FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012. For further info, call (212) 473-3400. Deadline: 8th of second preceding month. Edited by Mary Guzzy.

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● **FOR SALE:** 6-plate, 35mm KEM Universal editing flatbed; totally rebuilt w/all new motors, 2 new sound heads, 1 new flickerless picture head. \$14,500. Contact: Jan Marshall, (212) 673-6600, NY.

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● **FOR SALE:** 6-plate Steenbeck; old but good, rebuilt w/additional amplifier & speaker: \$6000 or best offer. Call: (212) 765-8860, NY.

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● **FOR SALE:** 16mm upright Moviola. Excellent condition; takes single-spliced film. 1 picture head; 2 sound heads. Save on flatbed rentals; it will pay for itself. Call (212) 666-6787, leave message, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Complete broadcast-quality production pkg. Includes Ikegami HL-83, ¾" JVC 4700U, color Videotek monitor, wave-form, mikes, lights & tripod. Production personnel also available. Competitive rates. Contact: Everglade Prods., (212) 925-1247, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm Moviola upright editing machine. New sound head; very good condition. 1 picture, 1 sound head. \$1200. Call: (212) 228-6709/(516) 734-6774, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Ikegami HL-79A, BVU 110, lights, mikes, insurance. \$450/day. Radio mikes, car, sunglasses, crew additional as required. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Tektronix waveform monitor, \$650. Panasonic NV-9300A. \$900. JVC 4400 portable ¾". \$1200. Frezzolini battery belts, 6AH. \$125. Sharp 13" monitor receiver, \$300. JVC KY 2000. \$2400. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony 366 reel-to-reel 7" tape deck. Quarterback stereo, 3 heads, new belts, rollers, playback head, edit feature. Nagra compatible. Best offer. Call (212) 548-2875 evenings 6-10pm, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Sunny attractive offices, furnished or unfurnished w/private entrances. Near west Village. 1, 2, & 3 room suites. Additional conference/screening room & office equipment available to share. Very high floor, excellent panoramic views, small terraces, air conditioning. 24 hr. building, excellent security. Sublet. Reasonable. Call: (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Broadcast ENG gear w/Ikegami HL83 & 79A cameras, BVU 110, all accessories & experienced crew. Sachtler tripod & time code available, plus ¾" computer editing. Contact: Lisa, Metro Video, (212) 608-6005, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony DXC-1640 industrial camera. Exceptional condition; 1½ yrs. old. \$600. Call: Ron Light, (505) 897-1426, NM.

● **FOR SALE:** Never-used Schoeps tri-pattern MK-6 mike head, G90° adapter, various windscreens & shockmounts; Bolex H16 reflex camera w/Switar macro 25mm fl. 1 & Elitar 17mm f2.5 lens. Call Richard Brick, (212) 925-8877, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** New Sony M-3 3-tube camera; BVU 110 or 4800 deck; batteries, monitor, tripod, mikes & Lowell lighting. Very portable. Reasonable rates for equipment & cameraperson; crew as needed. Contact: Alan (212) 222-3321, Caryn, (212) 222-6748, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** State-of-the-art 16mm film equipment at incredibly low rates. Call: (212) 222-6699, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm Maier-Hancock 816 hot splicer. \$350. Contact: Michael, (212) 843-8886, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Spectacular footage of New England environments, 5-8 min. programs; each features specific environment. All broadcast quality w/sync sound on 2", 1", ¾" & ½". Log & SMPTE time code provided; specify channel. All footage carries rights for any use. ½" preview tape cataloguing selections w/burned-in time code available for reference; \$35. Return it for updates or return & apply credit to first order. Contact: PlaNetwork, c/o Expanded Video, Inc., Seven Fox Ct., Portland ME 04101.

● **FOR SALE:** 3 CP-16A crystal/magnetic sound cameras w/sound heads. 9.5-95mm Angenieux, 12-120mm Angenieux, 11 mags, 6 batteries, 2 chargers, filters, Crystasound 6c mixer, 2 NCE fluid head tripods & cases. \$3000/all or \$1650/ea. rig. Call: Ann Marie, (212) 738-9126, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Arri II-B package. Variable speed motor; 7 mags, 400' & 200'; prime sharp lenses; lens shade w/filter holders; filters, nicad batteries & chargers. Original Arri II-B tripod w/long legs & baby legs. Mint condition. Better image than video. Also, 16mm single or double system camera; 2400' mags & 12-120mm Angenieux zoom. Nagra III w/additional factory-made features like built-in mike for slates. Many accessories & adaptors. Call: Ami Ron, (212) 206-8632, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** JVC KY 2000 ENG camera, low hours, very reliable w/new lens. \$2600. Will sell as package w/fluid head tripod & new 4 AH battery belt; \$3600. Echo Se-2 switcher, special effects generator w/sync, gen loc & color bars. Great for small studio without TBC or van. \$3000. Contact: Media Source, 146 Second St., Hallowell ME 04347, (207) 623-5101.

### Conferences • Seminars

● **1984 ROBERT FLAHERTY FILM SEMINAR:** Aug. 10-16 at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. This year's seminar celebrates spirit & vision of R. Flaherty & his wife, Frances. Program will include works in wide range of styles by prominent & promising film/video makers. Suggestions & submissions of film/video works invited. Contact: D. Marie Grieco. Registration & scholarship applications available.

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Contact: International Film Seminars, Inc., 25 West 43 St. Ste. 1118, NY NY 10036, (212) 764-4703.

● **AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS:** Annual meeting June 10-14 in Washington, DC. Five panels sponsored by NonPrint Media Committee will include "Programming Films in Museums," "Television & the Dollar," "Radio: The Overlooked Medium." Panels will consist of directors, curators, media specialists, public relations & development staff from variety of museums, plus representatives from communications industry & legal profession. Contact: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Division of Educational Services, Fifth Ave. & 82 St., NY NY 10028, (212) 879-5500.

● **FINANCING TACTICS FOR FILMED ENTERTAINMENT:** Tues., June 5, Plaza Hotel, NYC. Sponsored by Arthur Young International; topics include financing independent productions, private financing techniques, banker's approach to film financing, business plans, selling your rights & where film business is going. \$150. Contact: Arthur Young, 277 Park Ave., NY NY 10172, (212) 407-1500.

● **WORKSHOPS AT THE COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA:** Sound recording, Sat. & Sun. June 2 & 3, 10-6 pm. Instructor: Helene Kaplan. Optical Printing, Sat. June 9, 10-6 pm & Tues. June 12, 7-10 pm. Instructor: Bill Brand. Editing Techniques, Sat. & Sun. June 16 & 17, 10-6 pm. Instructor: Alan Berliner. Weekend workshops: \$85. Discounts for taking multiple workshops & 10% discounts for Collective members. Call: CLC, (212) 925-3926, NY.

● **TAHOE FILM/VIDEO WORKSHOPS:** July 8-14, Film Directing I & Cinematography & Lighting I. July 15-21, Film Directing II & Cinematography & Lighting II. September 16-22, Magic of the Movies. Special Effects Steadicam & Panaglide Workshop. Summer workshops take place in Squaw Valley/Lake Tahoe. Contact: Al Bourdet, Tahoe Photographic Workshops, Inc., PO Box 969, Truckee CA 95734, (916) 587-4500.

● **7th ANNUAL VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS CONGRESS:** June 25-28, NY Hilton. Expanded 4-day seminar program will present over 60 sessions on wide range of visual media topics including multi-image, film/video production, computer graphics, photography, interactive systems & videodiscs. 3-day exhibition hosts manufacturers & producers displaying state-of-the-art equipment. Special computer graphics film/video festival will take place during the Congress. Contact: VCC/Conference Headquarters, 2378 South Broadway, Denver CO 80210, (800) 525-9710.

● **SURVIVALFEST '84:** 2-wk. cultural festival dedicated to peace & justice celebrating rich traditions of all people through concerts, street theater, music, dance & film/video exhibits. International peace camp w/representatives of peace movement from around world will culminate in major forum & rally for peace July 28 (opening day of Summer Olympics in Los Angeles). Film & video programs organized by Carolyn Jung. Call: (212) 233-0349, NY.

● **VIDEO, FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS:** 1-wk. intensive workshops in Video Production, Filmmaking, Slide/Tape Production & Still Photography, led by George Stoney, Richard Kaplan, Sumner Glimcher & Eugene Richards. 2 sessions held for each subject; first begins Aug. 5; second on Aug. 12. Free brochure available. Contact: VF&P Workshops, Bennington College, Bennington VT 05201, (802) 442-5401.

## Editing Facilities

● **THE EDITING POST** offers ¾" editing at \$50/hr. w/editor. System includes JVC CR-8250 recorder w/vertical interval head switching & balanced audio inputs—broadcast standards, Chyron VP-1 graphics, time base correction & full time code capability, including window dubs. Discounts for longer projects. Convenient midtown NY location; 24 hr., 7-day access. Book time M-F, 10 am-6 pm. Contact: Gerry Pallor, (212) 757-4220, NY.

● **QUIET EDITING ROOM IN SOHO:** Rough cuts, cataloguing, time code edit lists, clip reels, supervised dubs, viewing. \$15/hr. w/experienced editor; 4-hr. minimum. Do it yourself, \$50/6 hrs.; 10 am-4 pm or 4 pm-10 pm. Call: (212) 925-6059, NY.

● **UPPER WEST SIDE STEENBECK RENTAL:** 8-plate or 6-plate; reasonable rates. Call: (212) 874-7444, NY.

● **EDITOR OF ACADEMY AWARD**-nominated documentary now cuts ¾" video off-line. JVC decks w/FM dub, Cezar IVC microprocessor controller, special effects keyer & colorizer, fade to black, waveform & pulse cross monitor, b&w graphics camera w/animation stand & titling system, mikes, turntable, audio cassette, VHS time code burn in. \$25/hr. for projects under \$3500. Contact: Bruce Ettinger, (212) 226-8489, NY.

● **SELF-SERVICE EDITING:** ¾" JVC Tape-handlers, RM-88U editor, free instruction. \$20/hr. Transfers, dubs, etc. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **MOVIOLA M-77s FOR RENT:** \$500/mo. in your workspace. 15% discount to AIVF members. Contact: Philmaster Productions, (212) 873-4470, NY.

● **LARGE EDIT ROOM** w/6-plate Steenbeck. Windows, carpet, phone, access top video deck, copy machine, etc. Contact: Bob McBride, Earthrise, 330 West 42 St., NY NY 10036, (212) 594-6967.

● **EDITING ROOM:** Fully equipped w/6-plate flatbed Moviola, bins, synchronizer, viewer & splicer. Near Greenwich Village west. High floor, panoramic view, small terrace. Conference/screening room to share. Also available for sublet office & office equipment. 24 hr. building, excellent security, reasonable. Call: (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **VIDEO EDITING & TIME CODING:** ¾" hi-speed video editing on new JVC 8250 w/convergence control. \$20/\$30 per hour. Low rates for time coding & time code editing. Call: Inpoint Production, (212) 679-3172, NY.

● **TWO COMPLETE EDITING ROOMS** in Chelsea: (a) 24-hr. access: Moviola flatbed w/torque motor box; complete 16mm edit equipment; complete kitchen & bathroom; minimal office facilities; telephone; air conditioning. (b) 10am-6pm access; Steenbeck; complete 16mm edit equipment; ltd. kitchen, bath facilities; specialized edit equipment available at extra cost. Contact: David Loucka, Lance Bird, (212) 584-7530, NY.

● **EDITING & POST-PRODUCTION FACILITIES AVAILABLE:** Short-term rentals only. 9am-5pm business days, KEM 8-plate, 16/35mm, ¾" editing, sound transfer, narration recording, extensive sound effects library, interlock screening. Contact: Cinetudes Film Productions, 295 West 4 St., NY NY 10014; (212) 966-4600.

● **BRODSKY & TREADWAY S-8 & 8MM FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER MASTERS:** Scene-by-scene density & total color correction, variable speed & freeze frame, sound from any source. Artists & broad-

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● **STEENBECKS FOR RENT:** Moderately priced by the month. Delivered to your workspace. Prompt repairs included. Call: Paul, (212) 316-2913, NY.

● **LARGE COMFORTABLE EDITING ROOM** w/KEM 8-plate Universal editing table, 16mm & 35mm, rewinds, bins, splicers, synchronizers, etc., private phone; additional office space available. Mid-town location. Call: Errol Morris Films, 1697 Broadway, NY NY 10019, (212) 757-7478/582-4045.

● **REGULAR & S-8 FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER:** Professional quality, industrial or broadcast; much better than you've seen before. Contact: Landy, 400 East 83 St. #4A, NY NY 10028; (212) 734-1402.

● **SONY BVU 3/4" EDITING:** 25/hr. w/editor. (212) 242-2320, NY.

● **STATE-OF-THE-ART** postproduction facilities at Reeves Teletape & Lee Rotheberg Productions available to artist/producers of non-commercial projects through On-Line program. Project must be demonstrably non-commercial in content & financing. Editing costs & scheduling tailored to specific project w/rates reduced 50-90%. Orientation provided. Contact: Robin White, Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 West 58 St., NY NY 10019, (212) 560-2085.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

● **TV-NIGHT EXERCISES:** Swedish television project based on artist videotapes seeks materials. Payment for all works broadcast. Send short U-Matic screening cassette, include phone number & address. Cassettes will be returned after completion of screening and/or broadcast. Contact: Nattovning, Peter R. Meyer, GA/ES, Swedish Television 2, 105 10, Stockholm, Sweden.

● **THE KITCHEN** seeks videotapes of all genres for exhibition & distribution. Include 3/4" cassette w/name, address, phone number & any supplementary information. Contact: The Kitchen, 59 Wooster St., NY NY 10012.

● **ART AGAINST APARTHEID**, series of exhibition & cultural events to be held Oct. 1984 in 5 boroughs of NYC, is beginning to collect works from artists. Sponsored by Foundation for Community of Artists w/support of the U.N. Special Committee Against Apartheid. Contact: AAA, 280 Broadway, Ste. 412, NY NY 10007, (212) 227-8473.

● **FOOD FOR THOUGHT:** Montse Guillen Restaurant, opening in NYC, seeks experimental & documentary film/tapes about food. Festive, ethnological, historical aspects of food are of interest. Fast food, haute cuisine, industrial processing, ritual preparation, festival banquets, solitary snacks, history of American agriculture & techniques of hunting considered. Material will be projected on screen & monitors built into bar. Contact: Antoni Miralda, 331 Greenwich St., NY NY 10013, (212) 226-8557.

● **FOOTAGE WANTED:** Extraordinary or time lapse footage of Statue of Liberty. Send description. Contact: Box 486, Northampton MA 01060, (413) 584-0186.

● **ART COM TELEVISION**, internationally distributed, artist-based programming service, requests submissions for programming consideration. 3/4" only. Contact: ART COM TV, PO Box 3123, Rincon Annex, San Francisco CA 94119, (415) 431-7524.

● **FILMMAKERS & VIDEO ARTISTS** working w/comedy interested in having their work distributed to nightclubs, bars & restaurants, contact: Zoom Video, (212) 737-5606, NY.

● **DISTRIBUTOR** of 16mm environmental issue films looking for new titles for developing catalogue. Contact: Umbrella Films, 60 Blake Rd., Brookline MA 02146, (617) 277-6639.

● **FOX/LORBER ASSOCIATES**, specialists in TV marketing & distribution, expanding feature film library for representation. Interested in full-length English-language films w/primarily narrative structure for sale to pay TV/cable, broadcast & home video, both domestic & foreign. Minimum length: 60 min.; no subtitles. Contact: Ericka Markman, Fox/Lorber Assocs., 79 Madison Ave., #601 NY NY 10016; (212) 686-6777.

● **PELICAN FILMS** seeks films/tapes for distribution to holistic health movement. We offer alternatives to traditional non-theatrical distribution. Contact: Arthur Hoyle, 3010 Santa Monica Blvd. #440, Santa Monica, CA 90404; (213) 399-3753.

## Freelancers

● **FILM/VIDEO FOOTAGE RESEARCHER:** Familiar w/collections of film & video libraries in NYC & Washington DC. Knowledge includes historical & present-day materials. Contact: Nicole, (201), 656-7939, NJ.

## GROWING PAINS

Help *FIVE* grow! We can no longer use our office space for screenings, seminars, workshops and other public events that we sponsor throughout the year. If you know of screening or meeting spaces with film and/or video equipment in Manhattan, please call (212) 473-3400.

● **TEXAS CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/Aaton 16mm camera pkg. available for hire. 10 yrs. news, doc & commercial experience. Extensive video experience. Contact: Gary Watson, (713) 568-2790, TX.

● **FILM COMPOSER AVAILABLE:** Credits include feature film, animation & commercial. Contact: Ben Yarmolinsky, (212) 749-1324, NY.

● **AWARD-WINNING CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/over 10 yrs. film & video experience ready for work on docs, low-budget features & shorts. 16mm film & broadcast 3-tube plumbicon w/3/4" broadcast deck. Lighting, grips, mikes, accessories & crew as needed. Professional credits & tape on request. Lowest rates in town. Contact: Val Galperin, Image House, (212) 863-7298/344-6676, NY.

● **PRODUCTION/EDITING ASSISTANT:** Experienced in video; interested in learning film. Reliable. Will work for little or nothing depending on project & learning possibilities. Call: Laura, (212) 965-0133, NY.

● **SCRIPT SUPERVISOR** available to work on independent features & shorts. Contact: Mindy Rodman, (212) 636-1426, NY.

● **PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT:** Can offer assistance in development, publicity campaigns, developing marketing & promotional materials. Contact: Kristen Simone, (212) 289-8299, NY.

● **VIDEOGRAPHER** w/new Sony DXC-M3 3-tube camera ready to shoot docs, dance & other projects. Deck, mikes, accessories & crew as needed; rates negotiable. Contact: L. Goodsmith, (212) 898-8157, NY.

● **GAFFER** available for docs, low-budget features & shorts. 12 yrs. experience in theater, video & film. Contact: Chris, (212) 499-3219, NY.

● **ASST. ART DIRECTOR** currently freelancing in print seeks work in production design. Some film experience. Resume, portfolio available. Contact: Eva, (212) 724-3879, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** w/Arri 16SR fast lenses & lights. Fluent in French, Spanish. Negotiable rates. Contact: Pedro Bonilla, (212) 662-1913, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** w/16mm & 3/4" production gear. Professional credits on request. Contact: Pacific St. Films, 630 Ninth Ave., NY NY 10036, (212) 875-9722.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** for fiction documentary. Fully equipped including Aaton 7LTr, Cooke 10.4-52, 16 or S16, Super Speed, L. T1.3 Reasonable rates. Contact: Igor Sunara, (212) 249-0416, NY.

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● **CAMERA ASSISTANT** w/Aaton 7 LTR for hire. Lighting & grip package available. Contact: John, (914) 473-0633, NY.

● **RESEARCHER:** Access & familiarity w/all NYC libraries & Library of Congress in DC. Efficient & meticulous w/background in history, political economy & filmmaking. Rate negotiable. Contact: Danny, (212) 924-4711, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/16mm Aaton & lights available to work w/independents on doc & narrative films. Negotiable rates. Contact: East Marion Films, (212) 420-0335, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** specializing in Hispanic subjects, US or Latin America, available for documentary. Fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Russian. English OK, too. CP GSMO, lights, sound, editing facilities. Based in Santa Fe. Contact: Pachco Lane, PO Box 266, Cerrillos NM 87010, (505) 982-6800.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/15 yrs. experience in 35 mm & 16mm interested in independent fiction films. Fluent in French. Contact: Babette Mangolte, (212) 925-6329, NY.

## Opportunities • Gigs

● **FEATURE & SHORT SCRIPTS WANTED:** Independent director/producer w/recently completed 1-hr. featurette/musical seeks new material for 16mm film(s). Themes of interest are spy/suspense, unwholesome dry unobvious humor, "new music" musicals. All types of schizophrenia encouraged. Also interested in musical video collaboration. Send scripts w/synopsis & SASE. Contact: Stephen Jon Lewicki, Cine Cine Productions, 155 W 81 St. #6C, NY NY 10024.

● **SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS:** Film/video indies & other "non-captives" earn cash selling information reports in established, multi-level direct-mail plan. Little time required. Very flexible. Send SASE for free details. Contact: T. Jackson, PO Box 24368, Edina MN 55424.

● **PRODUCER/CO-DIRECTOR WANTED** for overseas 16mm doc project. Pay during 10-wk. shooting schedule only. Experienced, extroverted, dedicated people only. Call: (212) 757-0499, NY.

● **MINNESOTA INDEPENDENT CHOREOGRAPHERS ALLIANCE** seeks videomakers sensitive to special needs of documenting dance to be included in MICA reference file. Contact: MICA, Hennepin Center for Arts, 528 Hennepin Ave., Ste. 201, Minneapolis MN 55403.

● **DIVISION OF INDIAN WORK** seeks producer to document event dealing w/American Indian traditions in July. Contact: Hope Flanagan, Div. Indian Work, 3045 Park Ave. So., Minneapolis MN 55407, (612) 827-1795.

● **WONDERWORKS**, 26-wk. entertainment series of 1-hr. dramas for pre-teens & families produced by Lee

Polk, seeks script, acquisition & co-production submissions. CPB has allocated \$6 million for series which premieres on public TV this fall. Programs will center on themes involving growing-up years & present engaging characters in exciting, entertaining situations. Co-production of WQED-Pittsburgh, WETA-Washington DC, KCET-Los Angeles, KCTA-Minneapolis/St. Paul & South Carolina Educational Television Network. Contact: Wonderworks National Office, 509 Madison Ave., Ste. 606, NY NY 10022.

● **DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER WANTED:** College of the Atlantic, coed, nonsectarian liberal arts college focusing on human ecology & interrelation & interdependence of living things, seeks independent filmmaker to document its ongoing experiment in "education & community," including challenge of self-government by students. Contact: Anne Pearson, c/o Drury, 10 High St., Bar Harbor ME 04609.

● **PRODUCTION ASSISTANT & ASSISTANT PRODUCER** wanted to work w/experienced filmmaker on production of partially funded "arts doc" for PBS. Contact: East Marion Films, (212) 420-0335, NY.

● **MAKE UP/WARDROBE PERSON** w/experience in film wanted for independent feature. Contact: John Sherman, 228 West Broadway, NY NY 10013, (212) 431-8442.

## Publications

● **MOTION PICTURE INVESTOR:** Newsletter provides financial analysis of motion picture investment outlook. Mostly commercial, but some small production companies surveyed. 24 issues/yr. \$395. Contact: Paul Kagan Associates, Inc., 26386 Carmel Rancho Lane, Carmel CA 93923, (408) 624-1536.

● **VIDEO MARKETING NEWSLETTER:** Semi-monthly report on developments in video markets, including home video. Aimed at retailers, distributors, manufacturers, program planners & producers. 24 issues/yr. \$277. Contact: Video Marketing, 1680 Vine St., Ste. 820, Hollywood CA 90028, (213) 462-6350.

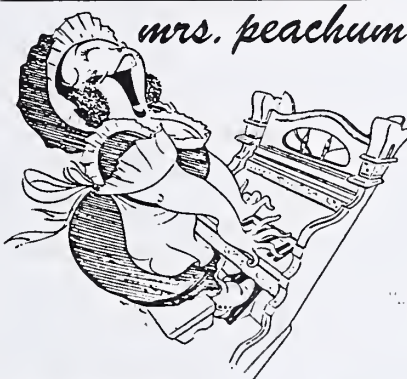
● **CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY SERVICE CABLE DIRECTORY:** Complete guide to California cable systems & community access facilities. Includes info about dedicated channels, community programs & schedules, studio/equipment availability, community channel marketing tools, training opportunities in over 516 communities. 432pp., \$24.95 + \$3 shipping. Contact: Foundation for Community Service Cable Television, 5616 Geary Blvd., Ste. 212, San Francisco CA 95121, (415) 387-0200.

● **CIRCULATING FILM LIBRARY CATALOG:** Comprehensive guide to 1000 films available for lease, rental & sale through Museum of Modern Art circulating film library. Extensive annotations for each film, interpretive essays on major aspects of the collection, including "International Avant-Garde Film: Scattered Pieces" by Larry Kardish, "The Documentary Film: Trends in the Nonfiction Tradition" by William Sloan, essays on American & British independent film. 127 b&w still photos, index & price list. 304 pp., \$12.95, \$9.78/MOMA members plus shipping. Contact: Publication Sales & Service, MOMA, 11 West 53 St., NY NY 10019, (212) 956-7262.

● **THE ART OF DEDUCTION:** Income Taxation for Performing, Literary & Visual Artists. New edition from Bay Area Lawyers for the Arts. \$6.33, \$5.79/BALA members. Contact: BALA, Building C, Fort Mason Ctr., San Francisco CA 94123, (415) 775-7200.

● **GET YOUR MONEY, HONEY:** Student's guide to finding grants & proposal writing. Geared to

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## Coming Attractions

### SPECIAL ISSUE ON EXHIBITION & DISTRIBUTION

*Travelling Packages*  
by Renee Tajima

*Do-It-Yourself Theatrical Openings*  
by Susan Linfield

*Hispanic TV Markets*  
by Maria T. Rojas

*An Independent Theater Owner  
Likes Indies* by Ken Eisen

*Picture Start: Midwest Distrib.*  
*Favors Small Films*  
by Mary Guzzu

### In the next issue of THE INDEPENDENT

● **WHEN YOU'RE SHOOTING IN NY:** Key Light productions, independent film & video producers, can furnish you w/complete production or support staff; researchers, writers, PAs, camerapeople & crews. Our credits include network, PBS, independent & industrial productions. Call: Beth, (212) 581-9748, NY.

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## Trims • Glitches

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to AIVF member Richard Kotuk, Academy Award nominee in the Documentary Features category for *Children of Darkness*, produced w/Ara Chekmayan. Program is part of CPB's Non-Fiction Television series on WNET-CH 13, NYC.

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to Edin Velez, whose video work, *Meta Mayan II* was exhibited April 3-May 6 at the Carnegie Institute Museum of Art, Pittsburgh PA.

● **PETRO-ART: GETTY TRUST & METROPOLITAN JOIN FORCES:** 2-part joint venture of J. Paul Getty Trust and Metropolitan Museum of Art called MMA/JPG Program for Art on Film & Video will seek to "provide both a thorough examination of existing film & video on art throughout the world & explore new ways of understanding & appreciating art through film video." 1st part of venture consists of developing exhaustive Critical Inventory of Films on Art, expected to take 3 yrs. to compile. Part 2, Experimental Films/Video on Art, will produce experimental programs in a variety of media to explore possibilities of films on art. For further information, contact: John Ross, Public Info. Officer, Metropolitan Museum of Art, (212) 879-5500, or Philippa Calnan, Public Affairs Director, J. Paul Getty Trust, (213) 277-9188.

● **UC VIDEO GARNERS JEROME AWARD:** The Jerome Foundation has awarded UC Video of Minneapolis a 3-yr. matching grant of \$55,000 to upgrade its video equipment available to independent artist members. State-of-the-art production and post-production equipment will be purchased.

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to AIVF independents awarded Southeast Media Fellowship production grants, administered by Appalshop, Whitesburg KY. Grantees include Ross Spears, Johnson City TN; Elizabeth Barrett, Whitesburg KY; David D. Williams, Richmond VA; Dan Curry, Miami FL; Charles Lyman, Tampa FL; & Nancy Yasecko, Cayce SC. AIVF member Gayla Jamison received an Equipment Access Grant from the South Carolina Arts Commission Media Arts Center. 1985 SEMFP applications will be available this fall. Contact: SEMFP, c/o Appalshop, Box 743, Whitesburg KY 41858.

● **CONGRATULATIONS:** CPB has awarded 12 production grants in the 1984 Open Solicitation category (Round II). 5 of the 12 projects were proposed by AIVF members: Carlotta Schoolman, the Kitchen, NYC; Robert Richter Productions, NYC; Rachel F. Lyon, San Francisco; Deborah Shaffer & David Goodman, NYC; & Eliot Noyes & Kit Laybourne, NYC. 2 of the other 7 proposals funded were from TV stations. A total of 462 proposals were entered. 58 of these were actually reviewed by an advisory panel to CPB staff, & from this group the 12 grantees were chosen.

● **ERRATA:** Janet Perlberg of the Film Forum has pointed out a chronological error in the April article on theatrical distribution. The first first-run independent feature to open at the Waverly was *The Atomic Cafe*, which came off a very successful two-week playdate at the Film Forum. *Smithereens* arrived at the Waverly a few months later, after the Cannes Festival. ■



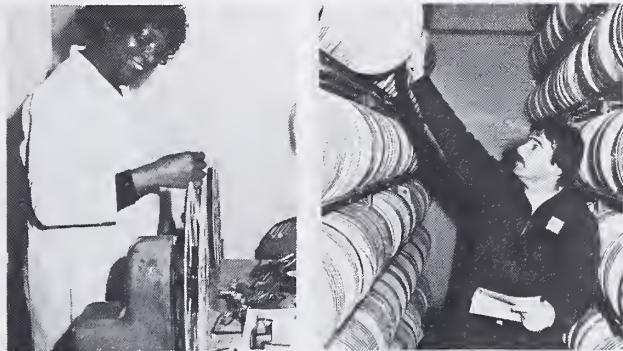
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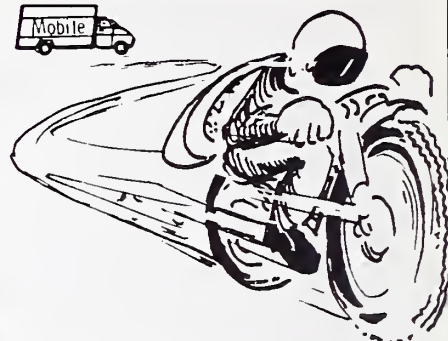
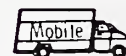
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CHICAGO

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A masterful j  
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did, most fascinat  
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## SPECIAL SUMMER ISSUE:

# EXHIBITION DISTRIBUTION

Getting Your Film Into a Theater

Touring Video Packages:  
Pros and Cons

New Markets in Spanish-Language TV

A Theater Owner Who Likes Indies

Midwest Distributor Struggles  
to Stay Afloat

Plus:

Russian S-8 Films Come to the West

Home Video Market:  
Boom for Indies?

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is indignation still  
in their eyes"

an, California Magazine

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ul cast of characters  
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"WONDERFULLY ZESTY."  
Kathleen Carroll, New York Daily News  
"IT'S TERRIFIC."  
JOYOUS, FUNNY, UNABASHEDLY EMOTIONAL."  
Roger Ebert, At the Movies  
"WONDERFUL!"  
Kathleen Carroll

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exquisitely detailed,  
dramatically compel-  
ing films ever made  
about the creative  
process."  
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maker who is un-  
aided to ask difficult  
questions and portray  
inner Herzog.  
arts and all."  
—Roger Ebert  
CHICAGO SUN  
TIMES

★★★★★  
den of Dreams  
uld be ranked with  
finest of films  
at great artists."  
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"A POST-PUNK MASTERWORK...  
FIERCE & FUNNY... ABOUT A PRIVATE EYE CAUGHT  
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# THE INDEPENDENT

JULY/AUGUST 1984  
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&  
The Association of  
Independent Video &  
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**COVER:** Whether by choice or necessity, many independents are opening their films in theaters without the backing of a distributor. Susan Linfield's article on theatrical self-distribution examines four such films. In this special Exhibition/Distribution issue we also report on the market outlook for Spanish-language TV and short film distribution in the Midwest, as well as the pros and cons of touring video packages. And the owner of a small, independent theater in small, independent Waterville, Maine tells us how things look from his side of the screen. Cover design by Deborah Payne.

### Good Luck, Kathleen!

We are sorry to report that this issue of *The Independent* is the last to be edited by Kathleen Hulser, who has been the driving force behind the magazine for over two years. In 1982 Kathleen was hired as editor, and entrusted with the task of building *The Independent* from a newsletter to a magazine, paralleling the emerging growth and complexity of the independent film and video movement. Kathleen did this and more, setting high editorial standards and forging a balance between the aesthetic and political concerns of the field.

Kathleen relays her thanks to everyone in the AIVF office and across the country for their contributions to the magazine. She will continue to write on the field as a freelancer, and we look forward to her continuing insights and essays.



**Before & After Hulser:** Kathleen became *The Independent's* editor in early 1982, when the publication was a 24-page, sporadically appearing newsletter. By 1984, she had built it up into a prominent 32-page illustrated magazine covering the gamut of independent film/video issues.



## MEDIA CLIPS

# Home Video: New Outlet for Indies?

DEBRA GOLDMAN

Remember the cable revolution which, we were told, would explode television into hundreds of channels, offering a spot on the dial for every interest and taste? The vastly increased demand for programming which would open doors for new producers and spawn new concepts of television entertainment? The wave of technological inevitability which would lift indies from the margin of the media industry, giving them access to audiences and putting dollars in their pockets?

It did not turn out quite that way. Consequently, it was an older and wiser group of independents who gathered last March at an AIVF seminar to hear businessmen and fellow indies outline the opportunities of the latest "revolutionary" medium: home videocassette. Can independents succeed in getting their work past the gatekeepers of theatrical and non-theatrical distribution, or of pay and public television, and into the homes of their audience? At a subsequent meeting of interested parties held in May, the answer was, "Why not try?" Cynicism bred of past disappointments notwithstanding, there are already several projects afoot designed to give independents a foothold in this growing marketplace.

The numbers of today's home video market offer some encouragement. Panel moderator and media consultant Arlene Zeichner cited market research figures which put the number of VCRs in this country at 9.1 million, and last year cassette sales also totalled 9.1 million. By 1986, market prognosticators predict, those figures should more than double. "It's a boom situation," Zeichner said, and those who want a piece of the action should get in now.

These figures come complete with the now-familiar hype that home video will "transform" television viewing. An effusive *Wall Street Journal* editorial recently declared that "because new constituencies with particular and intense interests can be identified...there should be a growth of new packages and producers of ideas, together with novel methods of distributing them." Videocassette machines, the article went on, represent a "technology of freedom," an instrument that allows the playing of information and cultural programs with little or no intervention from any [outside] entity."

Well, not exactly. The home video business is dominated by packagers, distributors and retailers who live by the conventional wisdom of the entertainment industry. Panelist Mitchell Kriegman, an independent videomaker who has already put his work on home videocassette,

pointed out that most of the tapes which reach the shelves of video stores are "pre-sold" commodities, be they *Flashdance*, Jane Fonda or David Bowie. In order to succeed, indies have to convince VCR owners to seize the opportunity to program their own television sets in ways cable broadcasters haven't dared.

The analogy most often invoked by those trying to get a handle on this new business is the record industry. (The home video scene is heavily populated by former record company execs.) Thus, one possibility is a specialized cassette "label" for independent work to be distributed by the majors in the same way record companies distribute smaller labels to audiences with specific musical tastes.

Such cassette labels already exist. Jordan Boch, president of Teleculture, has licensed a number of films, including *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, to MGM/UA, which the studio markets under the name Vandam Productions Limited. And at Media Network, a non-profit distribution information clearinghouse in New York, director Marc Weiss is hoping to duplicate that approach by packaging a number of social issue films and brokering them to a big cassette distributor.

"The economics of this business are interest-

ing," Weiss notes. The "non-entertainment" sector of the home cassette market is expected to hold its present 5% as the market expands. In today's terms this percentage translates into almost a half-million tapes, so an individual producer receiving royalties on his or her tapes can make a respectable amount of money selling a few thousand cassettes—a fraction of the market. Media Network's plans, Weiss reports, are only in preliminary stages. Formulating a package that might appeal to one of the majors will require advance money, so the Network has applied to the New York State Council on the Arts for start-up funds.

But is partnership with a major the way to go? Some question whether a major distributor with a mass market mentality will know how to reach the specialized audience for independents. On the other hand, the biggies are not totally averse to trying new methods of getting tapes to consumers. Obviously, MGM/UA cannot market the mammoth *Berlin Alexanderplatz* like *Terms of Endearment*. Consequently, the studio launched a first-time-ever direct sales campaign, bypassing video stores and going straight to consumers. According to Boch, two months after its release the tape had sold a respectable 500 units—at \$400 a pop. However, to capitalize on the built-in cachet of a foreign film, MGM/UA used a "Mercedes approach" in the campaign, and it is questionable whether independent tapes could succeed by the same method.

"No one really knows how to sell independents on tape," says Boch, who took part in the home video follow-up meeting. Direct marketing is a very expensive proposition. "It may be that independents should form some kind of cooperative retail outlet. The retail side of this business is very strong. [A recent report puts the number of video stores at 40,000.] So you might have 20 stores across the country sell-



"Now that we have a home entertainment system, all we need is a home."

Theresa McCracken



ing and promoting independent tapes exclusively. That might provide the economic basis to start up direct mail."

Independent producers Dan and Mark Jury are at present investigating the possibility of just such a store. Documentarians themselves, they see the direct-to-the-consumer potential of home video as a boon for the notoriously hard-to-sell documentary. They envision an "all-documentary video store" nestled somewhere in the congenial confines of downtown Manhattan or the Upper West Side. "We'd like to structure things so that the producer will make money on every sale and rental," says Dan Jury. Such a set-up would be a departure from current standard practices: at present, distributors sell cassettes outright to retailers, who then usually rent them to customers at whatever price and as many times as they can. Since producers and distributors make no additional money from multiple rentals, the majors don't really like the system. And, as Zeichner stated at the seminar, independent film and video artists like it even less.

The Jurys are aware of the obstacles they face, from the problem of obtaining rights to a sufficient number of films to the costs of dubbing and the expense of packaging the tapes with the requisite graphics and liner notes. But a number of these challenges are currently being met in a smaller-scale project under development by Steve Savage, co-owner, with Michael Pollack, of a Manhattan video retail outlet called New Video.

New Video is not your average video-store-down-the-mall. It began as a small storefront in Greenwich Village with an unusually eclectic collection of cassettes. Diversity of merchandise and unique promotional methods bred success, and Savage and Pollack now have two stores, with a third in the works. "A lot of people who opened video stores did it for a quick buck," Savage observes. "They don't care anything about movies. We regard our selection like a fine wine collection: we have some tapes that hardly ever go out, but it makes us feel good just knowing that we have them." Thus, on New Video's shelves the consumer can find not only *Star Trek II* but also tapes by Kriegman, Meredith Monk and Nam June Paik.

None of these indie-produced cassettes have done too well, Savage admits, but he believes they can be marketed. To that end, New Video is creating what Savage calls "a lab situation in which we'll let independent producers compete in the environment of a commercial video store." A number of selected films and tapes will be packaged into a special series. New Video will supply advance money to dub the tapes, while the producer will be responsible for the packaging graphics. Savage estimates that it will cost New Video \$15 to \$18 to make each cassette, and the deal Savage hopes to work out would allow the business to recoup its out-of-pocket expenses before paying royalties. Any additional profits would then be split 50/50 with the producer.

"Make no mistake, we're in this as a business, and we feel offering independent work is good business," Savage declares. "We think it's very important for us, as a New York video store, to

VOL. CCIII NO. 94 ★ ★ ★

## The Little Picture

### A First Feature Film Is Made on the Cheap, Not Hollywood's Way

The Koch-Marschall Team Tries to Do With Ardor What Costs Disney Cash

### A Vision Out of 'Flashdance'

By Meg Cox  
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

CHICAGO — The makers of a movie called "Heartbreaker" didn't have to search for the collection of rusted-out cars they needed for a running gag in the film. The cast and crew owned all the clunkers they could use.

More on the set of this low-budget feature...

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despite the fact that the Fed was about to open...

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be featuring and supporting New York film and videomakers. It's really a great promotion." He intends to push the series through articles in the store's give-away newspaper and through carefully nurtured editorial coverage. (In this latter department, New Video has been particularly successful in the past: this spring the store was visited by reporters from *Newsweek* as well as a TV crew from ABC's "20/20.") Savage will also encourage participating producers to do grassroots promotions of their own through mailings. Where appropriate, he suggests, producers might use theatrical exhibition to boost awareness of cassettes, and use cassettes to create advance word for theatrical showings. "If we don't succeed in selling the tapes one way, we'll try another," he vows.

If indies are serious about home video, they will have to start looking at distribution in a new way. Many mediamakers may discover, as did the Jurys, that they don't even own the video rights to their films, because these rights were signed away to non-theatrical distributors who sell and rent ¾" cassettes. Producers should also be aware of the inevitable threat cheap rental of ½" cassettes poses to non-theatrical sales. But producer Kriegman warns against overvaluation of independent works: "The notion that something is video art, so it should sell for \$300, is ridiculous. The important thing is to get into the new market."

Boch has gone so far as to suggest that any independent producer who successfully interests a major into taking on his or her work "just give it to them" even without an advance. "They do pay royalties, and you could make \$5,000-10,000 over a couple of years," Savage concurs. "You've got to be adventurous. I find some independents are almost paranoid about being ripped off. I can understand that. They put a lot of money into a project and they are concerned with getting it back. But in the long run, it may be more important to get the stuff out, to make a name for yourself, and thereby create a demand for future work."

## Wall St. Journal Musings: The Glamourless Grind

Independents have hit the media jackpot—the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*. On May 14, the august financial daily carried a feature by staff reporter Meg Cox called "The Little Picture," which traced the making of *Heartbreaker*, a 16mm independent low-budget feature produced by Phil Koch and Sally Marschall, who had previously made industrials and educational films.

Describing independent filmmaking as "a glamourless grind" and "a ride in the slow lane," Cox reported that *Heartbreaker's* production manager dispensed cash from his jeans pockets, its director spent time "returning soda pop bottles for deposit," its cinematographer had never shot a feature, and its "production secretary" was actually a cat. But did she have to mention that "bathroom privileges are begged at shops and restaurants along the way"?

Comparing *Heartbreaker* (which she described as "an adolescent fantasy in punk-style dress") with *Country*, the new \$10 million Walt Disney film starring Jessica Lange and Sam Shepard, Cox noted that *Country's* location nurse had more film experience than *Heartbreaker's* most seasoned actors. And, she reported, despite the fact that Lange's costumes consist of "frumpy slacks and dresses from an Iowa thrift shop," *Country's* costume budget is \$40,000. *Country* has a 25-person Teamsters transportation staff and a \$1 million transportation budget, while *Heartbreaker* relies on "[its] production manager Ken Bernstein, and chutzpah" when it has to move. And, of course, the *Country* crew is well-supplied with "honey wagons"—no begging at restaurants here.

The struggle to make an independent film does not, of course, stop when the shooting does. While Cox wrote of the growing market for independent features and the rise of the classics divisions (appropriately, she put "classics" in quotes), she accurately noted that, "Once made, [independent] films are almost sure to go unseen. 'Let's be realistic,' says the sales manager for one New York distributor. 'The odds against getting a (non-studio) dramatic feature distributed are 100 to one.'"

Nevertheless, Cox wrote, the "satisfactions" of independent filmmaking are "coveted even by people in tinseltown." She closed her article with a remark from *Country's* second assistant director, Regina Gordon: "I'll bet there isn't a person here who wouldn't leave a studio set to go work on a low-budget independent. It's special when it's more your own." Still, cash, costumes, experience, trucks and bathrooms might be nice.

—Susan Linfield

## Good Luck, Isaac!

Best of luck to program coordinator Isaac Jackson, who left FIV/AIVF in May to concentrate his energies on video production both as an independent artist and as the assistant studio manager at Young Filmmakers/Video Arts. We look forward to seeing the fruits of Isaac's new creative labors (read: tapes, tapes, tapes).



**SUPER-8**

# No Soviet Boycott At Super-8 Olympics

TONI TREADWAY &amp; BOB BRODSKY

In the midst of the current abyss of Soviet-American relations, we were given a special opportunity to see examples of Russian amateur cinema last February. After years of negotiations, the Association of Young Quebecois Cinema, the International Federation of Super-8 Cinema and the Russian consulate in Montreal were finally able to bring a group of Soviet films to the Montreal International Super-8 Film Festival.

The presentation raised many questions about the Russian amateur filmmaking system and challenged the audience's preconceptions about independent filmmaking both here and there. The audience wanted to know if any Russian could make a film, how training is accomplished, if there is access to equipment and supplies, if the filmmakers have artistic control over the style and content of their films, where amateur films are shown, what role the state plays, what varieties of films are made, how a Russian sees his world and whether amateur films from other countries are shown in Russia.

The program of Russian films was presented by Edmond Keosaian, director of the amateur section of the national cinema association in the USSR. A professional film director himself, Keosaian oversees amateur film activity in "cine-clubs" that have 350,000 members throughout Russia. Keosaian made it plain at the outset that he is an Armenian (and therefore a representative of a minority group in Russia), and Canadian-Armenians showed up with him during his visit and translated whenever the questioning went beyond the limits of his English.

A charming man of dapper dress and expansive gestures, Keosaian responded with humor and patience to five days of queries from a largely uninformed and suspicious festival audience. He described a system of state-supported filmmaking that sounded utopian to some and claustrophobic to others.

**WIDESPREAD ACCESS**

In Russia, he explained, everyone has access to technical training and equipment through the cine-club system. Everyone has a club or "interest group" at his school or workplace. The state gives direct or indirect support through the factory in the form of a resident filmmaker/teacher, all the necessary production equipment, filmstock and processing. Anyone can make a film by coming up with a script, gathering a production team and signing up to do it. The films are first screened locally, then compete on regional and national levels. Winning film-

makers may be invited to enter the prestigious national film school. The government support is a way of seeding the field and searching out talent.

When the afternoon came for us to see the Russian films (on PAL U-matic), a hundred people clustered around one monitor in the anteroom of the Cinematheque National in Montreal. The film-to-tape transfers were very good; we were told the originals were regular 8mm. (Why the films were presented on PAL when the Russian standard is SECAM was never explained.) Technically, the films were highly competent, appearing to be professionally lit and edited and shot on negative filmstock. Since we know of no 8mm negative, we were doubtful of their amateur status. When questioned on this technical point, Keosaian admitted that the films were prints from negatives manufactured in Russia, and offered to send us a roll. "We Russians are very handy and can make something from nothing," he declared with a twinkle in his eye. "But your Kodakfilm is better than this." His filmstock looked as good as Kodak's with the exception of occasional uneven processing.

The films, said Keosaian, were picked for this occasion and this audience, assuming no one spoke Russian. He explained that a decision was made to show a representative sample of cine-club films from across the country in different socialist republics as well as from various filmmaking genres. Only two films used language; most were essentially silent but accompanied by romantic or heroic music. Concentration was clearly placed on the visuals, a cultural tribute to the forefathers of Russian cinema.

**DOCTORS, MOTHERS, BASKETBALL STARS**

The first film presented was made by a beginning filmmaker in a western Siberian factory where 100,000 people make steel cable. The montage of molten metal and heavy machinery was poetic at times, hypnotic at other times—but we would have been more interested in images of workers doing their jobs. We saw workers only in mass movements as part of the industrial process.

Another film was made by an assistant to a famous heart surgeon. It was a classic day-in-the-life documentary with scenes of the doctor's morning jog, grim hospital rounds, and a coronary by-pass operation, ending with an English voiceover translation of the doctor reading thank-you notes from grateful patients. We



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saw modern hospital care and got a fairly close look at the surgeon. The most revealing moment for us appeared during the doctor's rounds as a fearful patient shrank from the camera during examination.

In the next film, an architect had documented the 14th-century ruins of a czarist country house slated for demolition. We were told that the architect used films like this to lobby for preservation and restoration of historic sites, apparently successfully.

Another spare, well-composed film began as a home movie of sunglassed tourists embarking on a bus trip to Elsinore Castle. The obligatory pan out of the bus window did little to prepare us for the dramatic montage of torch-bearing Shakespearean characters roaming through the castle's depths. In phenomenally deep focus a distraught Hamlet inched his fingers along a wet stone wall towards the camera. Then, as suddenly as it appeared, the high key lighting vanished and we were back on the tour bus.

Keosaian was especially proud of a film made by a 21-year-old woman from the Leningrad Institute of Economics. She formed a cine-club there and produced a complex animated film of great beauty and metaphysical overtones.

Another film was an excellently performed depiction of a mother and daughter and gave us a glimpse of life in their contemporary apartment, complete with posters on the wall. Keosaian claimed the film depicted a social problem, but we couldn't figure out what it was.

A film of the women's championship basketball team T-T-T traced the muscles and sweat of the women working out in the gym in explicit and rather sensual close-ups. This was the only film that did not look professionally lit. Still, the filming and montage were impeccable.

Finally, Keosaian introduced a film he said was made by children between the ages of six and 12—but we couldn't believe it. It was a megaton clay animation on huge sets with incredibly even single-source lighting to represent sunlight. The film opened with a wide shot of the large studio and the filmmakers assembling the set. The animation was appropriately comic, the music like a polka.

### SHOCK WAVES

These films sent a shock wave through the audience for their technical competence. But the audience wanted to know whether a truly independent filmmaker could get film and equipment and make films outside the cine-club system. To this question a puzzled Keosaian simply repeated that everyone in the USSR is connected through their school or workplace to a cine-club and that is how, if not where, everyone makes

films. A young Quebecois rephrased his question speaking of the unemployed, alienated artist who wanted to express his unemployed, alienated vision on film. Keosaian demurred and repeated his answer. Apparently, there is no such person in Soviet society, a situation that was evidently beyond the comprehension of the Quebecois. "Even if," Keosaian ventured, "a person were disabled and therefore could not participate in normal work, the state provides for him and he has various 'interest groups' at his treatment center."

When the bemused murmur subsided, someone jumped in with the question of censorship: "What subjects are forbidden?" Keosaian replied with elegant brevity, "Only two: pornography and anti-Soviet propaganda." (A Russian-speaking friend later told us that he thinks the average Russian is so well self-censored by his culture that state censorship is seldom an issue.)

Keosaian's remarks and the films themselves fueled a lot of conversation among the filmmakers present. Many North Americans have been lobbying for years for increased funding levels from public sources for independent productions and for film/video access centers. We saw the chaos faced by the American independent filmmaker in a slightly different light. The Soviet system appears to maximize access to filmmaking—but only at its most basic level. State-approved standards determine access to higher levels and to distribution.

### CENSORSHIP HERE AND THERE

American independents complain loudly of too little public support and catch-as-catch-can distribution. What degree of control over our productions are we willing to give up in order to increase the funding pot? Ironically, the American system of public support for independent film production may exercise more devastating control over independents' productions than the Soviet system, for American independents are directly accountable to public funding officials. Whereas Soviet filmmakers apparently begin in a climate of control, American filmmakers begin with expectations of complete freedom and end up in censorship at the point of funding or distribution. Until the American system of public funding limits its oversight of independent productions to financial scrutiny (or better, to good counsel) and learns the value of disseminating minority points of view, many filmmakers will be better off driving taxis to support a Super-8/video habit.

Our Quebecois hosts were pleased with the lively exchange. They have a bit of both worlds: a system of state-supported filmmaking as well as a lot of amateur and Super-8 activity in both organized and unorganized corners of society. The true Quebecois amateur has no expectations of the state and no strings. In French, "amateur" means lover and carries no negative connotations with it. *Vive le cineaste amateur!* ■

Bob Brodsky and Toni Treadway are the authors of *Super 8 in the Video Age*, which was recently translated into Spanish.

JULY/AUGUST 1984



## FIELD REPORT

# Final Cut Debated: The US vs. Europe

RANDY MINTZ

"Guerrilla filmmaking [is when] you play the game and cut through the politics to get funding and approval, but then do what you want," said Canadian art director Judy Koonar last April at the International Public Television Screening Conference (INPUT) in Charleston, South Carolina. Television producers from around the world met to discuss various issues affecting TV production, including the right of "final edit"—a right hotly contested and craved by American producers, but evidently an assumed axiom of filmmaking in most other Western nations.

In the Netherlands, said producer/director Luk Blancquaert, "Money is always a problem, but once you have it you're free to do your film your own way." His film *Schillen* (Peelings), produced for the Nederlands Theater Instituut, uses mime, poetry, and white, extraterrestrial costumes to explore the inner trappings of a mental patient's mind. Call it beautiful, obscure, or avant-garde, but don't bother calling *TV Guide* to find out when something like it will be on the air here.

Filmmaker Sturla Gunnarsson said that the Canadian Film Board executive producer with whom he worked on the Academy Award-nominee docudrama *After the Axe* "did what a really good executive producer should do. He would come in every once in a while with a few comments, but he never imposed himself; he let us run with it." Similarly, David Fanning, *Frontline*'s executive producer, likened his role to "the editor of a weekly magazine that features one person's cover story and somewhat reflects that person's style." But he defended his right to the final edit as essential. "I stand between the writer and publisher, making sure we won't have legal problems and ensuring stand-up journalism."

At the INPUT screening of *Frontline* producer Ofra Bikel's *The Russians Are Here*, BBC veteran Philip Donnellan charged that the film "loses the human poetry with its offensive 'we-they' narration." He added, "As filmmakers, we have to go out with all the tools in our bag—narration, voiceover, interviews, and silence—but in America only certain tools are given to filmmakers." Donnellan also opposed *Frontline*'s "distracting" use of a host to introduce and conclude each segment, but Fanning said that although he wished it wasn't necessary, a regular host says to an American audience: "This is serious—listen!"

Unlike in America, where a film's budget is often patched together from a conglomerate of sources, funding in other countries is centralized and often government-run. In Denmark, there is

only one station, TV-Byen. Noted director Jon Bang Carlsen, "I guess we're spoiled in Denmark. We just make three phone calls [with proposals]." He said that "guerrilla tactics" also work in Denmark, where he receives full control once a proposal is accepted. But he complained of having trouble getting approval for films that don't promise high ratings.

## LOOKING ABROAD

Some American producers have sought refuge for their work in outside countries. Eckart Stein, program editor for West Germany's ZDF *Das kleine Fernsehspiel* (Little Television Drama), a showcase for independent, mainly non-German productions, said with frustration that of the 19 films by Americans the program has sponsored, PBS has aired only one, even though it could have had the shows "for an apple." However, he said he will continue to support American producers because of their "outrageous commitment. They sometimes have to wait five or six years to do their film."

*Das klein Fernsehspiel* guarantees producers the final edit and almost always a minimum of one broadcast. It does not require a script in advance. Films can run anywhere from 30 minutes to three-and-a-half hours—a freedom that handicaps easy translation to the American screen. Stein said that good ratings, while welcome, are not a motivating factor in program choice; the show frequently sponsors Third World productions that reach on-

ly two percent of the viewing public. But although many of the Third World films cannot be broadcast in their native countries for political reasons, Stein will not allow a second, "acceptable" version of a film to be made. [For an interview with Eckart Stein, see the October 1982 *Independent*—Ed.]

American television, on the other hand, is known for sometimes tackling tough political issues, as censorship here tends to be commercially rather than government-inspired. The international INPUT audience was shocked by American television journalists' frank exposure of our system's pitfalls, from Watergate (*Summer of Judgement*, WETA, Washington DC) to the shooting of Communist demonstrators (*Frontline's* 88 Seconds in Greensboro, WGBH, Boston). [However, it's interesting to note which topics are still verboten on American television—cf. PBS's refusal to air *Seventeen*, part of its acclaimed *Middletown* series, because of the film's blunt depiction of interracial romance in a "typical" American high school.—Ed.]

In contrast, French independent Denis Chégaray recalled how a film he was making about the sex lives of minors was cancelled under President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's administration because of fears that it might touch on the politically sensitive topic of teenage unemployment, although he said the state-run television system had loosened up under François Mitterrand. Similarly, in Belgium, *Mais Nous Sommes Tous Antiracistes* (But We're All Anti-Racist), a videotape exploring racial discrimination against voters in a recent election, could not be broadcast until after the election. In Britain, *The Marketing of Margaret*, a BBC production about the powerful role advertising played in Margaret Thatcher's election, examined issues that are routinely discussed in America. Yet it was considered an investigative piece in England, revolutionary not only because it revealed Madison Avenue selling techniques that are new to British elections, but also because, as BBC executive George Carey explained, "Secrecy is a deep and abiding part of the British way. We have no deep-rooted 'people have the right to know' heritage."

Still, filmmaker David Leland was able to get his script *Made in Britain* produced and broadcast in his own country. The Americans at INPUT were awed by the film, which shows the isolation and desperation of a skinhead youth and the world which created him. They pointed out that although television personnel here would blame the film's rough language, in reality it's the rough issues the film raises that render it unacceptable for American television.

Randy Mintz is a freelance writer who lives in Washington DC.

Bob van Dantzig



Luk Blancquaert's *Schillen*: Call it beautiful or obscure, but don't bother calling *TV Guide*.

## Happy Birthday to Us!

FIVF/IVF celebrates its 10th birthday this year. Board chair Lillian Jimenez has formed a committee to organize a birthday extravaganza later in the fall. All members are urged to get involved.

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# Market Outlook: Film Shorts in the Midwest

*Picture Start is devoted to short film distribution. But while scouting for new product may be heaven, selling those filmic gems is sometimes a journey in the other direction.*

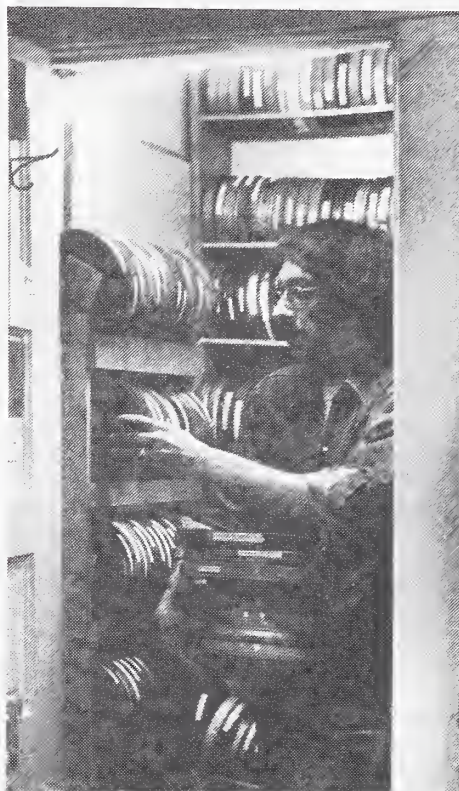
MARY GUZZY

Out on the prairie, a small distribution company is growing and sometimes thriving in the rocky soil of the short film market.

In the midst of the brutal midwestern December of 1983, *The Independent* went on the road to Champaign/Urbana, Illinois to visit the offices of Picture Start, one of the few surviving distributors of independent experimental shorts and animation. As the midday temperatures hovered at 25 degrees below zero and blizzard conditions closed off area interstates, company president Ron Epple and partner Jeff Hellyer discussed their efforts to expand and promote an appreciation for short films in shrinking and increasingly conservative cable TV, university and film library rental markets.

Picture Start was officially incorporated in 1979 by Epple and a group of other film scholars associated with the University of Illinois in Champaign. But Epple's interest in independent film goes back to the 1960's when he helped finance his way through graduate school by renting a church hall and showing shorts for a small admission price. He later worked for Pyramid Films of Santa Monica, attending festivals and scouting for films. It was during this time that he realized a number of excellent shorts were not being picked up for distribution although they received distinction on the festival circuit. Eventually, Epple bought out Picture Start's other original co-founders. Hellyer, an enthusiastic complement to Epple's laid-back demeanor and arid wit, considers a weekend at a festival doing nothing but screening independent work to be "like heaven."

Inhabiting a three-story white frame house, where Epple also lives, Picture Start has the comfortable, cluttered look of a hands-on operation. Closets are crammed with prints neatly and carefully stored. Every inch of wall space is lined with shelves of the tapes the company sends to prospective buyers. Examples of special promotional flyers and posters produced from selected films are on display. In Epple's office a bulletin board explodes with 40 or more index cards listing the different packages of short titles Picture Start is painstakingly compiling as part of its marketing strategy for the year to come. The company currently represents over 500 titles, and scouts new films at such festivals as Athens (where Epple also acted as a judge this year), Chicago, Big Muddy, Sinking Creek, Ann Arbor, Baltimore and the American Film Festival in New York.



Picture Start's owner Ron Epple in cinematic heaven. "Cable programmers are afraid of accidentally offending people," he says.

## FAR FROM HEAVEN

While scouting for a new product may be heaven, selling those filmic gems is sometimes a journey in the other direction. Epple often works on a deferred salary, and though the rewards are there in matching progressive buyers with innovative films, the process of educating the more conservative programmer is often frustrating, especially when those programmers control the big-bucks area of cable television.

To conquer this market, the company is compiling hour-long programs of shorts, with 10-15 films per program, packaged with a wraparound commentary by a "name" entertainer. HBO is interested in the idea of a program called *Funniest Shorts of the '80s*. Other packages include *State-of-the-Art Animation* and *Adult Animation*. The company recently published its first complete catalog, and it is on the success of the catalog mailing and the pre-packaging strategy

that Picture Start is pinning its financial hopes.

Regarding the difficulties of cracking the cable market, Epple can lay out the maze of obstacles faced by the small independent distributor like a well-worn quilt. The number of still-solvent cable services buying independent (or any type of) programming has dwindled to barely three or four companies as the competitive market drives out the less aggressive, less mass culture-oriented services in favor of movie channels and rock video. As the remaining services become more successful, their acquisitions become more conservative and commercial, while licensing fees offered for unknown work have not risen from their 1981 levels. Meanwhile, competition is fierce for precious interstitial time between features, where shorts have eked out a tenuous, second-class existence. Large record companies can provide rock video shorts free to cable programmers, and cable companies are under pressure internally to air more promotional advertising as they struggle to convince viewers their service is worth the monthly bill.

## PECULIAR THOUGHTS

In addition, there is a peculiar logic among programmers which allows them to cablecast soft porn features while refusing to air shorts with political or erotic content—like many of the best films in the Picture Start catalog. "A very conscious double standard exists between the selection of shorts and features," Epple says. "The logic is that if you tune in to *Emanuelle*, you know what you're getting because programs like *Emanuelle* are listed for what they are and shorts are not. They're afraid of people being accidentally offended instead of purposely offended."

Aside from the cable market, Picture Start pursues public television and has had films licensed by WNET-13's *Independent Focus* series and KQED in San Francisco, although recently the response from the West Coast has been poor. In the Midwest, Chicago's Public TV station WTTW has a seven-year-old short film series entitled *Image Union*, a half-hour program of back-to-back shorts which still pays \$15 per minute for films shown. Currently, *Image Union*'s programming policy seems to give preference to Illinois filmmakers, so it is difficult for Picture Start to sell its titles from other regions there. At one time, Picture Start licensed *The Trouble with Fred*, "a dead frog film," to *Saturday Night Live* for \$2000. Since then, however, *SNL* has ceased acquiring outside independently produced works and prefers to produce its own short material.

In December, rentals to university and film libraries also looked as bleak as a frozen Illinois cornfield. "There's the occasional school or library with a progressive buyer," Epple said, "but most of our films are too far-out for the people in positions of power where acquisitions are concerned."

All of this can affect the ultimate choice of material Picture Start will represent. One New York animator received a polite rejection letter from Epple saying that the demands of the cable market were guiding Picture Start to contract for



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more traditional new animation while taking on only those experimental producers with a more established track record. But Hellyer maintains that what sets Picture Start apart from other distributors is its willingness to take on riskier works, although, he admits, "We are less likely to take a film today if we feel it's just going to sit on the shelf."

The staff views and discusses all submissions. Settling in for a screening of an animation package in Eppler's converted attic, I was quickly transported by the quality of the work shown. Lisa Craft's *Desire Pie* is an erotic animation that just might rival the real thing. *Rapid Eye Movements* by Jeff Carpenter and Mary Lambert is dreamlike and fragmentary—a lonely trip through an urban social landscape. The strange and beautiful *Asparagus* by Suzan Pitt is literally a garden of earthly delights. But sophisticated, innovative and witty as these films are, they were all made in the late 1970's. It will be interesting to see if Picture Start's relationship to new avant-garde material will indeed be significantly influenced by conservative market pressures.

**POSTSCRIPT**

If December's chill seemed to have settled over Picture Start's prospects, things began to warm up a bit in the spring. "Business is up!" reported Hellyer in April. Due to the mailing of the catalog, orders for film rentals had doubled since December. Requests for packages were numerous, and the company was still rearranging titles into programs based on new films acquired at this year's festivals. A theater owner in faraway Enterprise, Oregon had expressed interest in Picture Start's films. At the Athens Film Festival, producers represented by Picture Start took approximately six awards in the competition, including Best Feature Documentary for Jeff Kreines' and Joel DeMott's *Seventeen* (the censored segment of the *Middletown* TV series) and Best Comic Short for *Headshot* by Ilan Duran. "We're off to our best start ever this year," Hellyer said, and Eppler concurred, adding with typical restraint that TV markets remain erratic, and they had received an outright request from KQED not to send any more shorts. So it goes. ■

**LETTERS****Davis on Playhouse**

To the Editor:

First, I want to thank you, your colleagues and Rob Edelman for your coverage of *American Playhouse* in the May issue.

Second, a comment and an amplification. In your page 3 editorial you fail to note a basic difference in both the amount and source of funding between the UK's Channel Four and us. They have at least ten times the money we do and it is truly unrestricted, no-strings cash. Conversely, our largest single source of support is the Station Program Cooperative of the public television stations. To get those stations to pay their very large share of the cost every year means we must not get so far "out front" that no one is with us. If we push the risky material too far, *American Playhouse* will cease to exist. I assure you that is not an overstatement of our situation.

As to amplification, I regret that Rob Edelman apparently did not interview either our executive producer, Lindsay Law or our director of program development, Miranda Barry. Lindsay is the creative "engine" of our enterprise and has much closer direct contact with the various producers, directors and filmmakers than I do. It was Lindsay's initiative that caused *Testament*, *El Norte*, *A Flash of Green* and many others to become realities. He deserves most of the credit for the positive reaction about *American Playhouse* from filmmakers which the article reports.

Miranda, functioning as a story editor, works closely and cooperatively with almost all of the writers, helping them improve and

refine their scripts. I know that every one of them has appreciated the help and guidance she has provided.

—David M. Davis, Executive Director

*Rob Edelman replies: Mr. Davis answered all questions regarding American Playhouse to my satisfaction, and there was no need to repeat them to Lindsay Law or Miranda Barry. However, Ms. Barry is quoted in the sidebar. ■*

**Spotted Eagle on Highwater**

To the Editor:

Just a note about this "Highwater" business which seems to pop up here and there. [See "Media Clips" in the June *Independent*.—Ed.] I was talking with a few friends who are writers and happen to be Indian people. They had heard about the Jamahe situation of course, and thought it quite absurd for the subject of Highwater to get as much attention as it has. [There is] a writer who has been working on a book manuscript about her own people for over 12 years and is now reticent about having it published for fear of being attacked publicly or otherwise. The question arises, how many Indian people will withdraw from expressing themselves through their writings because of these fears? For some the saying goes, "I have to live in my community," and the trade-off is not to go public, whatever the endeavor. And, unfortunately, we (Indian people) have so few established people in the mass media now. I think the positive approach would be to bolster and give support to the many Indian people who should get public recognition, rather than go after the so-called enemies.

—Walk in Beauty,  
Chris Spotted Eagle



# An Indie Theater Owner: Life Under the Marquee

*The business of going to the movies is a glorified guessing game—but independent films can be successful in the commercial marketplace with careful attention.*

KEN EISEN

There's no experience for an independent film exhibitor quite so literally sickening as to be strolling about the theater at five or seven, idly dusting the bottom of the candy counter between repeated forays out the entrance door to see what act of God has occurred to prevent customers from flocking to opening night of that hot new independent film you booked a few months back, when you'd shown *Educating Rita* or *The Man from Snowy River* or *Tender Mercies* once too often for your own social and artistic equilibrium. And besides, they'd made you some money, so you could afford to "take a chance."

It isn't always like that with independent films, especially in these days of independent "success." But for every *Return of the Secaucus Seven* or *El Norte*, there are 10 or 20 films that don't find a distributor, find one and still remain virtually unseen, or find one and promptly get mishandled. Down the line from even that "successful" opening in New York or LA or Chicago is the empty theater in Waterville, Maine. Independent film producers, having faced years of struggle to get their films made, often shepherd them only as far as that big city opening, assuming their job is, at last, over. I hear wolf howls resounding through a largely empty theater.

Independent films, no matter how good, are by definition different from "ordinary" films—even ordinary "quality" or "art" films. They are less broad-based, either in their subject, approach or gloss. Therefore, selling them to a popular audience is that much harder. As an exhibitor, you can't lie to an audience; most of them won't like *Liquid Sky* as much as they will

*The Big Chill*. That doesn't mean, of course, that there isn't a large audience that will enjoy *Liquid Sky*. But that audience has to be cultivated. Specifically, distribution of lesser-known films has to involve careful attention to promotion in every engagement.

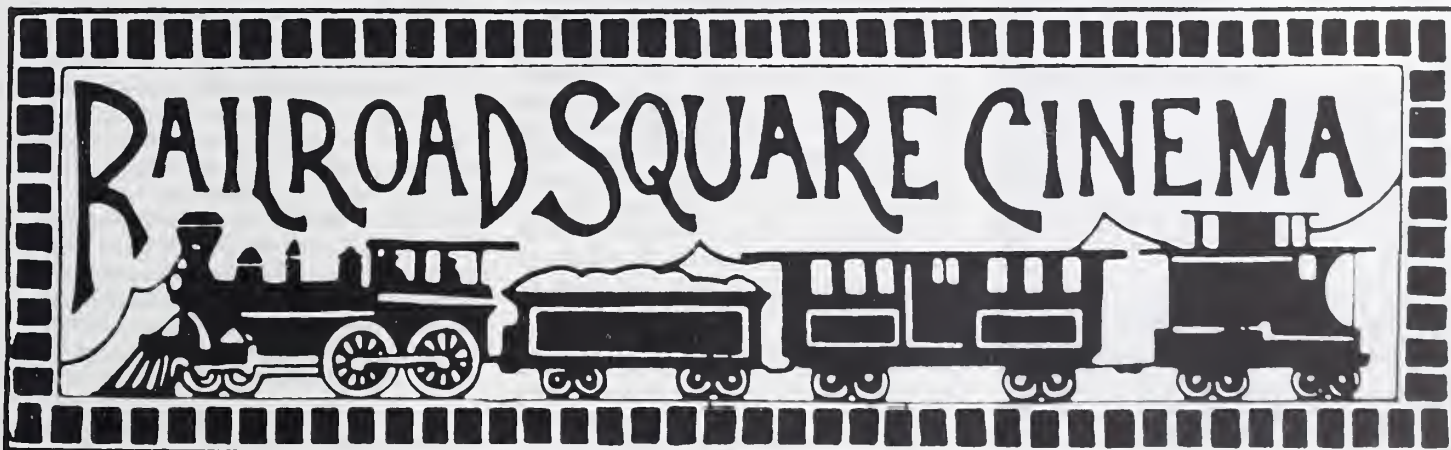
## NO ONE'S TALKING

The first point at which attention can be lost is when the film is sold to a distributor. While a sale to a major distributor can bring money, clout and professional attention to an independent film's marketing, it can also (and with breath-taking quickness) result in an orphaned film. Almost without exception, major distributors and their classics divisions can't seem to handle much input from independents in their marketing systems. They make a lot of mistakes, even when they distribute a film successfully. The trailer for *Eating Raoul* looked like a pilot for a very bad TV sitcom. The trailer for *Betrayal* turned Pinter's wit and distance into soap opera. The print ads for *The Man from Snowy River* proclaimed, "Now you can see for yourself what everyone's been talking about!", forgetting that distribution of the film was on a wide-run, territorial basis, so that absolutely no one was talking about the film when the ads appeared.

Bad promotional campaigns also marred two recent films by American independents picked up for distribution by Paramount, *Baby It's You* and *Testament*. (Though Paramount financed *Baby It's You*, making its inclusion as an independent film technically incorrect, the film's budget, method and location of production—and, sad to say, eventual handling—make it an

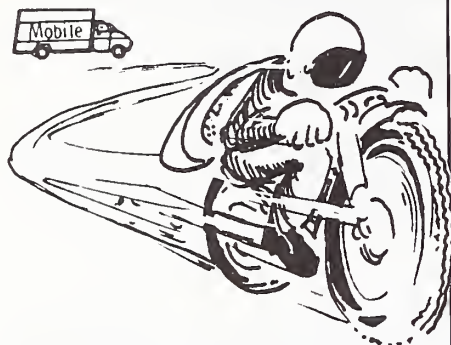
independent film in all other respects.) The initial ad campaign for *Baby It's You* was clever, with opposing pages in a high school yearbook for the pictures and accomplishments (hers: yearbook editor, National Honor Society, class officer; his: shop monitor) of the film's ill-suited lovers. But follow-up ads dropped this campaign and featured peculiarly anemic quotes, though the film had drawn some enthusiastic notices. When the film "failed" in its New York premiere (actually posting figures that would have been considered successful by a smaller distributor with less overhead), all promotion and publicity money was cut off, forcing exhibitors in other cities to front the film's advertising budget by themselves. Only a few one-sheets for the film were ever printed. Trailers were never made. Few prints were struck. One print of *Baby It's You* was earmarked for all of New England—particularly fertile territory for John Sayles films—making it virtually impossible for exhibitors to book the film even if they wanted to. Word of mouth, Sayles' name and the film's subject made *Baby It's You* a moderate success for most small exhibitors who finally succeeded in showing it. But the film might have been an overwhelming success with different handling.

Lynn Littman's *Testament* was the hit of the influential Telluride Film Festival. A tentative distribution deal with United Artists Classics was broken at the festival when she decided to go with Paramount. So what happened? The film opened fairly well, even by major distributor standards, several weeks before *The Day After* aired on TV, despite a print campaign with no image, tag line or distinctive look. When grosses





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fell following *The Day After's* airing, the film was abandoned by Paramount. Again, no ad money. Again, one print for all of New England. No attempt to re-market the film was made after *The Day After's* airing.

## MINOR HAZARDS

If dealing with a major has its hazards, so does dealing with a small distributor. Insufficient attention can be a problem with a small distributor if it appears to them that the film isn't working. I've had small distributors try to talk me out of booking a film they'd given up on. And producers know better than exhibitors the hazards of insufficient money, clout and experience among smaller companies. In dealing with any distributor, perhaps the best thing an independent producer can look for at contract time is a guaranteed involvement in the film's down-the-line distribution and promotion.

Self-distribution guarantees such involvement—although that may be its only advantage. But in some cases, it may be the best way to handle a film, provided you've got a couple of (more) years of your life you want to give over to your film. As an exhibitor, I've had almost nothing but positive experiences with self-distribution. Filmmakers actively pushing their own film create publicity, set up press screenings, etc. to offset the lack of national publicity. More often than not this works at least moderately well, but it's a big effort and, understandably, few people are willing to make it. In my experience, self-distribution by local filmmakers almost always works because the filmmakers are able to use local connections and media to publicize their films, but it's also worked from cross-country. [For more on theatrical self-distribution, see Susan Linfield's article, page 20.—Ed.] Small exhibitors remain receptive to self-distribution because it generally means there will be backing to help the film.

## "OK, I'LL COME!"

Whatever the method of distribution, a film's ad campaign is crucial to its success. Independent films demand imagination in their marketing—imagination which is more often than not lacking. Good reviews are wonderful, but are rarely capable of selling a film by themselves. A trailer with a title and then three minutes of roll-up quotes is as deadly as the word "documentary" to a potential audience. The overreliance on quotes to sell a film has had the effect of dulling audiences to all quotes and all reviews, and of even obliterating language as a means of communication about film. Incredibly, campaigns too often ignore the fact that film is largely a visual medium. I've heard audiences yell "OK, OK, I'll come!" at the screen during a seemingly endless quote trailer. Of course, this means they won't.

They also won't come, with exceptions, to a film they perceive as being unentertaining. So what else is new? This is a variation on Harry Cohn's classic, "If you've got a message, send it Western Union" speech, a justification for Hol-

lywood's lowest pandering and exactly what independent filmmakers and exhibitors are always fighting against. Check. But audiences still won't come if they don't think they'll be in some sense entertained. Entertained can mean enlightened, edified, or exposed to something new, but it cannot mean bored, depressed or amateurishly regaled. On the other hand, a campaign that tries to make an independent film look like a Hollywood film usually results only in the implication that the independent film is aspiring to but not making it as a "real" film.

## VIOLENCE: NO / SEX: YES

In the insulated world of filmmakers, distributors and exhibitors, it can be painfully easy to lose touch with the unreel world inhabited by that mythic monolith, the audience. Overestimating an audience is as easy as underestimating one. While it's true that independent film audiences don't want to see much gratuitous (or, for that matter, non-gratuitous) violence, they're not unreceptive to gratuitous sex. And I've been shocked at the size and receptiveness of the audience for some tough and little-known films. I've also been flabbergasted to find, for instance, that a large percentage of the audience for *Fanny and Alexander* had never before seen a Bergman film.

The business of going to the movies is a glorified guessing game for exhibitors, as it is for filmmakers and audiences. Clearly though, independent films can be successful in the commercial marketplace with careful attention. Recently, Robert Young's *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* had a smash opening engagement in San Francisco after careful fieldwork and promotion by the film's representatives. Based on the strength of that engagement, a distribution deal was made with Embassy Pictures, which opened the film hastily but at a top first-run theater in New York. Reviews of the film were fairly good, but the same groundwork that had been done in San Francisco, designed to draw on the film's appeal to Hispanic audiences and then branch out, was not done by Embassy. The film died at the box office, enjoyed a few other mediocre engagements and then entered a state of limbo, Embassy admitting that it had no idea what to do with it. Recently, Edward Olmos and Tom Bower, two of *Gregorio Cortez's* original producers, negotiated with Embassy to regain distribution rights for the film. They are now distributing *Gregorio Cortez* themselves, giving careful attention to each engagement.

Despite increased audiences for independent films in recent years, a natural audience that will just turn up for the latest interesting independent production the way regulars queue up for the most recent Clint Eastwood or *Star Wars* installment simply doesn't exist. Until it does (take a deep breath), successful showings of independent films will depend on close cooperation and attention from everybody involved from the time the film is finished to the time it hits the screen in its smallest engagements.

Ken Eisen is a co-owner of the Railroad Square Cinema in Waterville, Maine.



# Market Outlook: Spanish-Language TV

*As the Latin community grows, gaining visibility and power, so do the number of television stations and programs trying to reach this new market.*

MARIA T. ROJAS

Independent producers who are considering Spanish-language television in the United States as an outlet for their work have an increasing number of options available. Reaching these stations, however, is not necessarily an easy job.

Like most commercial stations, Spanish-language television does not usually consider acquiring work from independent producers, and even fewer have actually aired anything. But as the Latin community rapidly grows, gaining visibility and power, so do the number of television stations and programs trying to appeal to this new market. Stations are therefore looking for new programming alternatives to reach the estimated 22 million Hispanics living in the United States.

In the majority of these cases, new programming means more *novelas* (soap operas), entertainment shows, syndicated programs and feature films from abroad. But as competition grows between the Spanish Network (SIN)—the nation's largest Spanish station—and other stations, programming directors are expressing interest in becoming more familiar with and even possibly acquiring independent productions.

## STATIC OVER SIN

For over twenty years, SIN had a monopoly on the Hispanic market. But its total reliance on foreign programming created discontent among viewers and a legal wrangle with the Federal Communications Commission over charges of anticompetitive practices and foreign control. The network produces virtually no original programming aside from the national news. Its 251 affiliates depend greatly on the programming from SIN. Local programming is limited to talk shows and news, and usually excludes documentaries. SIN's director of programming, Rosita Peru, says that "the problem with acquiring a documentary is that it is not sellable, but that doesn't mean it isn't good."

Within the SIN structure, the pay-cable service Galavision may be most open to acquiring some independent productions. Although the Galavision schedule mainly includes feature films, movies and theater, there is a potential for special presentations such as Gregory Nava's *El Norte*.

## THE NETSPAN CHALLENGE

NetSpan, the new Spanish language network begun last January, is a potential rival to SIN  
JULY/AUGUST 1984

and a new ray of hope for independent producers. NetSpan is the result of the merger of the three major non-SIN Spanish-language stations—New York's WJMU/47, Chicago's WBBS/60, and Los Angeles/San Diego's KSCI/18—into one network. These three combined markets represent more than one-third of all Hispanic households, according to a 1983-4 Arbitron Ethnic Population report.

NetSpan's slogan describes the system well: "Local appeal... network efficiency." Programming will consist of major programs acquired from abroad and specials to be produced by the network. These programs will be bicycled from station to station. At first, the specials will be mainly, but not strictly, music and entertainment shows since these produce the most revenue, according to Nelly Galan, NetSpan's director of special projects.

Galan, an independent producer, is also inclined to include a varied and educational program menu for the specials which air on Sunday each month. For starters, she has managed to get NetSpan to package a series of experimental video which she produced. Galan is also certain that the network will be receptive to documentaries, documentaries and feature films by independent producers. "Commercial television is a like a stubborn father," Galan said. "It thinks that informative and educational programming belong in public television, but with persistence this attitude can be changed gradually. We can start scheduling some documentaries that our people can benefit from and relate to. We just have to work more in the promotional aspect."

All programs aired by NetSpan must be in Spanish—sub-titles are not commonly accepted. Programs can be socially-oriented as long as they do not take a particular political stand. Usually, the network pays an average of \$1,500 for a one-hour program acquisition to be aired in the three markets. NetSpan retains the rights of any acquisition for five years.

## NETSPAN AFFILIATES

Of NetSpan's three stations, WBBS/60 in Chicago is the only one which programs documentaries and productions from independents on a regular basis. This in part could be attributed to the fact that the director of programming, Ivan Acosta, is also an independent producer.

Acosta has managed to balance his program-

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## Latin American Films

Latin American films, most of them receiving their American premieres, will be presented at the Public Theatre in New York August 10-20 as a part of the fourth annual "Festival Latino de Nueva York." The film exhibition program is entitled "IV National Latino Film Festival and First International Film Showcase" and is produced by Joseph Papp in cooperation with El Museo del Barrio. The event is coordinated by AIVF member Diego Echeverria.

ming by mixing the traditional programs that sell well with new productions such *Los Minutos y Las Horas* (The Minutes and the Hours), a documentary about the abuse of heroin. Another documentary he has acquired is *Los Perseguidos* (The Persecuted Ones), which deals with Miskito Indians in Nicaragua. "I look for the type of program that can illustrate as well as entertain," said Acosta. "We still have to be able to sell it in order to pay at least the cost of transmission." Acquisition fees vary from \$100 to \$1,000.

The largest affiliate of the network is WNJU/47 in New York. According to ratings by Arbitron, Nelson and OMAR, Channel 47 usually has the largest Spanish-language viewing audience in the New York area, even when competing with the large SIN affiliate, Channel 41. "The secret for independent producers," says NJU president Carlos Barba, "is not to sell in the Hispanic market, but to export their work to a foreign market." He thinks there are better opportunities for independent producers in Europe and Latin America than in the US.

Barba's programming philosophy is to offer local identification through a national network, and he envisions a place for the work of independent producers. But, along with other programming managers, Barba indicated that he is rarely approached by independents. He is, however, receptive to airing their work.

The third station of the network, KSCI/18 in Los Angeles and San Diego, has been operating in Spanish only since April 30 of this year and therefore does not have a record of acquisitions from independent producers. Program director Alfonso Araya says he will consider any type of work, although he prefers acquisitions from well-known producers.

## OTHER OUTLETS

In addition to the three NetSpan stations and the SIN affiliates, there are a number of stations that program partially in Spanish, such as Channel 23 in San Antonio and Channel 39 in Miami. In El Paso, Texas, there are two stations which transmit in Spanish: PBS's KCOS/13 and Channel 26. Kathy Burnett, programming manager at KCOS/13 said that she is in need of good Spanish programming but that she has had a difficult time working with independents. "It is a problem of self-management. They are hard to get a hold of, they don't have contracts or don't like to deal with them," she claimed.

Nevertheless, she is interested in documentaries, educational material, music and cultural

programs and feature films as long as they stay away from sex and violence. KCOS/13 accepts material in ¾" and 2" videocassette or 16mm film and will handle any necessary transfers. Acquisitions are paid a flat per-hour rate of \$250-\$300, with the rights to two plays for no more than a year.

The best vehicle for reaching public television stations which air any Spanish-language programming is the Latino Consortium, which operates out of KCET in Los Angeles and carries programs from member stations and independent producers. It also produces a series called *Presente*.

Sylvia Morales, director of the consortium, calculates that the number of acquisitions from independent producers is almost 60 percent. Curiously, 40 percent of these are from non-Latino producers. "Latino producers don't usually come to the consortium first. They only do so as a last resource," said Morales.

Another option which is becoming more popular among independent producers is forming a production company and syndicating their own programing, as in the case of *Latin Temple*, a program of La Raza Production Center (a for-profit arm of the National Council of La Raza).

Established in 1981, *Latin Temple*, is the first nationally syndicated Hispanic TV magazine distributed through ABC, NBC and CBS affiliates. It is produced in Washington, DC with stories submitted by freelance reporters and independent producers throughout the country. *Latin Temple* delivers news, information, and features of particular interest to the Latin community with a national rather than local origination. Also currently in production is *Hispanus*, a multi-part series of one-hour specials on Hispanic Americans designed for air on PBS's national schedule.

## SAME OLD PROBLEMS

In general, dealing with Latino stations is no different from dealing with other commercial stations: independent producers are questioned as to the marketability of their work. There is also the problem of programming directors unfamiliar with independents and their product. Most were unaware of films like Jane Morrison's *The Two Worlds of Angelita* and Ana-Maria Garcia's *La Operacion*, although they expressed interest in these and other productions when I mentioned them.

These programmers were also unaware of the San Antonio CineFestival and the Latino Film and Video Festival in New York, which offer the best sample of productions relevant to Latinos living in the United States. Independent producers were also absent from the recent National Hispanic Media Conference in Washington DC, at which programming directors and station representatives discussed important issues relating to Latin accessibility, productions, ownership and media images. For too long now, all parties have failed to come together.

Maria T. Rojas is an independent producer and journalist from New Jersey who now works with the *Latino TV Broadcasting Service* in New York.

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# Video Takes to the Road

*A proliferation of touring video packages has cultivated new audiences. But the field suffers from growing pains and deflation. Exposure is not enough.*

RENEE TAJIMA

Aesthetically exciting, easy to use and portable—it's a natural that packaged video shows would get out on the road. While the Ithaca Video Festival pioneered the travelling exhibition format as early as 1975, the phenomenon has really boomed in the 1980's. Driven by the proliferation of more and better tapes and fueled by new institutional enthusiasm—not to mention new National Endowment or arts council dollars—packaged shows have brought video art to more venues and wider audiences, from the stolid colonnades of fine art museums to urban rock clubs and community colleges.

Video artists are delighted by the access these shows offer—their tapes can reach as many as 20 locations on a single tour. "My experience as someone who is primarily independent," said Minneapolis-based video artist Ken Feingold, "is that it would be almost impossible for me to have taken all the time to have sent out preview dubs and contacted all those places." Shows like the American Federation of Art's (AFA) tour of the 1983 Whitney Biennial have opened up prestigious international venues such as the Tate Gallery in London to American artists. And in small but decisive ways a broader public is emerging through unlikely venues such as local libraries, art centers and public schools—a practice begun by the now-endangered Ithaca Video Festival and carried on by the Southwest Alternative Media Project's (SWAMP) Film/Video Tour and others.

But beneath the enthusiasm, there are grumblings of discontent from artists. There is an almost universal feeling that their work is under-

priced: rental fees for a 30-60 minute tape in a package rarely exceed \$75-100. A particular peeve is the common practice of paying on a per-minute basis. "It doesn't make any sense to me," declared videomaker Matthew Geller, whose tape *Windfalls* is touring with the AFA show. "It's like saying a two-minute tape is worth one-thirtieth of a 60-minute tape." (However, all of the tour organizers I spoke to set an average of \$25 minimum for shorter tapes.)

In the days when Ithaca was the only game in town, the low rental fees were a necessity. In order to attract local institutions to take the show, package fees were set at a miniscule \$30 per week five years ago, and only climbed to \$50 per week during the 8th annual (1982/1983)

Laurie McDonald/SWAMP



*The Dying Swan*, part of the SWAMP tour. "SWAMP takes a moral stand for artists," says Tom Glebink.

Foreign Correspondence



The Foreign Correspondence tour: "An innovative marriage of independent media and mainstream news clips on Central America."

tour. Artists' fees were accordingly low: with 50 stops on the tour in the festival's last year, the fee to artists averaged out to \$2 per site. The premise of exposure has become obsolete, particularly as the medium enters a larger arena.

"There are a lot of little festivals put out by people who are struggling," said Edin Velez, whose *Meta Mayan II* has gone to the San Francisco International Video Festival (SFIVF), the AFA Whitney Biennial tour and the Foreign Correspondence package. "I've never said 'no' to giving them a tape for free, or for \$25 or \$30—virtually nothing. But a lot of festivals are bringing up this whole exposure thing, which is ridiculous. People from big institutions literally told me, 'We can't pay you anything, but the exposure would be great.'"

Most of the artists I spoke with expressed an

understanding of the festivals' underfunded situations, and most of the programmers I spoke to regretted their inability to pay artists more. Still, the field is wracked by poor communication. Said producer and Anthology Film Archives video curator Bob Harris, "My biggest gripe is the lack of clarity from the beginning." For example, when he was first contacted by Locus Communications to participate in the Video in the Boroughs show (see *The Independent*, January/February 1984), Harris was quoted a per-minute price for his 30-minute piece, but later found that his work would be excerpted—and at a consequently lower fee.

"In general, among video festivals there tends to be a lack of professionalism," said Mitchell Kriegman. "People aren't trying to steal from people, but because festivals are institutions, artists' fees come second to deficits and overall problems of media centers."

A chronic problem is slow royalty payments. "This stuff is so abstract. You get a check for \$50 at some point and don't remember what it's for," said Los Angeles-based videomaker Ilene Segalove who, along with a number of other artists, still has not been paid for Media Study/Bufalo's Video/Humor: TV/Comedy tour, which was launched over a year-and-a-half-ago. (Tour coordinator Nancy Norwood has recently updated all of the artists by letter, and is in the process of getting after the host sites for package fee payments and readying payments to the artists.) Artists participating in the Video/Humor: TV/Comedy show did, however, receive documentation of the tour in the form of a catalogue and press clippings. Artists in some other festivals



Martha Rosler's *Semiotics in the Kitchen*, part of the ICA tour "Ten Years of Video: Greatest Hits of the 70s."



received no publicity materials of any kind, and had no idea of where their tapes had been until their first invoice statement arrived, often at the end of the tour.

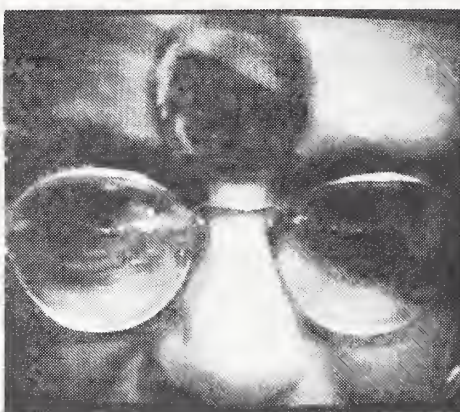
The main source of ire is The Contract. Many artists recalled their shock when a tour contract arrived in the mail. Dara Birnbaum was requested to sign a memorandum of agreement by Locus Communications for her four-minute piece, *P.M. Magazine*, which made no mention of the Video in the Boroughs project, asked for rights to exhibit the entire tape or segments of it, gave permission for unlimited use of the tape for the length of the contract, and allowed up to three non-commercial broadcast or cablecast showings—all for a flat fee of \$50.

When Birnbaum challenged the contract, Locus readily agreed to revise it. She subsequently received a "real artist's contract" which was satisfactory to her in its specificity of the use of her tape and in its limitations—and her fee was doubled to \$100. Birnbaum noted that later agreements with Locus were greatly improved.

But even experienced art exhibition organizers were not beyond criticism for the contracts they proposed. Matthew Geller said of the AFA, "I completely changed the contract they gave me. In the original contract the only thing I didn't give up was the copyright." Geller quickly points out that AFA was "quite willing to make all the changes I wanted." Other artists in the AFA show indicated that they were also able to satisfactorily revise their contracts. But the Whitney Biennial was weighted with veteran and widely-exhibited producers who have sufficient experience and leverage to negotiate their own terms. "It's OK if you realize what's in the fine print," said former AIVF program coordinator and video artist Isaac Jackson, "but how about those who don't know?"

One answer to the problem is a greater standardization of video contracts—although standards are no easy thing to come by in a field where a tape might be sold by art galleries and home video stores alike. Jackson, Birnbaum and videomaker Martha Rosler have been formulating contract guidelines (sample contracts are now available through AIVF's information services). A number of artists cited Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI) and The Kitchen as standard-setters for the field; almost all tour organizers are following their lead in setting an average \$25 minimum for short tapes. Some were also adapting the EAI standard rate schedule, which is more broadly based than the per-minute calculation. According to SFIVF's Steve Agetstein, EAI sets a \$25 minimum for tapes under 10 minutes in length; \$50 for 10-30 minute tapes; and \$75 for over-30 minutes. And these rates are climbing upwards.

Let thou who hath not sinned...As the organizer of the first Asian American International Video Festival in 1982, I cringe at the thought of the discrepancies I must have imposed on artists. The absence of guidelines certainly aggravated the effort to deal fair and square. I called funders, curators and artists alike in search of payment and contract standards. "There are none" was the universal response. Fortunately,



The AFA tour: "Weighted with widely-exhibited producers." Above, Paik & Kubota's Allan 'N' Allen 'N' Complaint.

videomakers like Shigeko Kubota had the requisite experience to counsel me on how much I should pay artists.

It may well be the responsibility of video artists themselves to get involved in setting new conventions and gently school inexperienced programmers. Lyn Blumenthal of Video Data Bank said, "The main issue for artists is to read their contracts. I think for artists to go screaming after the fact is ridiculous. I don't think a program could underprice an independent—only independents can underprice themselves, because they sign these contracts." Indeed, many artists are loathe to get entangled in haggling to negotiate an agreement which may only net them a few hundred dollars.

The fortunate ones have distributors like Blumenthal or EAI to represent their tapes directly. When EAI and Castelli/Sonnabend negotiated for their artists who were included by the New England Foundation for the Arts (organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art), they demanded not only a \$25 per-screening fee but also a for-the-life-of-the-tape purchase of each work, at an average of \$250 each. While distributors like EAI and Castelli/Sonnabend

## PACKAGE DESIGN

Of course, the most exciting aspect of touring packages is not contracts and royalty payments, but the works themselves, combined into a single integral viewing experience.

The packages are as varied as their audiences and venues. It is no easy task to convince a hoity-toity art gallery to exhibit video or a struggling public library to take a chance on a program which might attract only a limited audience. But this is exactly the challenge that video packagers face.

Each program I looked at for this article had its own distinct character in either its programming or exhibiting conception. The New England Foundation for the Arts' (NEFA) 10 Years of Video tour, the San Francisco International Video Festival (SFIVF) and the American Federation on the Arts' (AFA) Whitney Biennial program are all dominated by video luminaries such as Nam June Paik and Bill Viola. But while AFA takes the show to prestige spots like the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, NEFA subsidizes stops at small regional museums and art centers, and SFIVF has experimented with everything from late-night cabarets to a San Francisco Bay ferry.

Exhibition narrowcasting has emerged with thematic or stylistic packages. Video/TV: Humor/Comedy, organized by Media Study/Bufallo, is jam-packed with experiments in comedy from veterans William Wegman, General Idea and Ant Farm, Mitchell Kriegman of *Saturday Night Live* and Graeme Whifler. Foreign Correspondence, curated by Skip Blumberg, is an innovative marriage of independent media and mainstream news clips to produce "strong moments in video" on Central America. There is art (Edin Velez's *Meta Mayan*),

theater (Nancy Garuba and Eddie Becker's *Everyone Understands Freedom*), hard documentaries from Jon Alpert, Martin Lucas and Nancy Peckenhham *et al*, and even Reagan's Central American policy speech via the major networks. Foreign Correspondence's full eight-hour collection is available to media centers in the tour on a library-demand basis for two-to-three weeks. And, with permission from the producers, Blumberg edited an 80-minute excerpt reel which plays at a public screening to introduce each tour date.

The SWAMP Film/Video Tour differs from other packages in that it has no central curator. It is a populist show, bringing regional videomakers to regional audiences. According to videomaker and programmer Laurie McDonald, "Because of the variety of artists in Texas, we decided to accumulate works from the region and let the host sites curate the works themselves. I would send submissions on videotape and they could choose themselves. We thought that was more equitable to the artists, instead of a small group of people being shown. The democratic process has worked well." Video exhibition is new to the region, and SWAMP wanted the local venues to program work at their own pace and in their own style.

A note on the Ithaca Video Festival, the pioneer of travelling shows: festival director Phillip Mallory Jones has indicated to *The Independent* that the news of Ithaca's death is greatly exaggerated. However, the 1983 festival, which was programmed last fall, still has not started out on the road. Nor had a submission date been given for the next festival. We will keep you posted on any new developments.

—RT■



are highly selective in their representation of artists, they tend to be trendsetters for the field as a whole.

Some exhibition organizers have taken up the banner of artists' rights themselves. SFIVF's Ageststein raised a few eyebrows when he refused to take tapes which were being underpriced at other festivals. [For more on this issue, see *Steve Seid's festival column, this issue.*] Underpricing does not only hurt artists, though. Because the field is characterized by non-exclusive contracts and overlapping distribution, an exhibitor could possibly gather separate tapes at lower prices than that offered by any single packager.

Texas-based videomaker Tom Giebink considers SWAMP to be the equivalent of an artists' union in its handling of the Film/Video Tour. "They lobby for everything they can get from the groups they take the show to," said Giebink. "They're the only group that deals with non-commercial stuff. They demand that artists should get paid for their work like anyone else. They take a stand for artists as a group—it's something of a moral stand." Thus SWAMP not only provides exposure to new audiences for Southwest videomakers, but also pays a \$3-per-minute fee (compared to AFA and Media Study/Buffalo's \$1-per-minute rate) and keeps their artists in constant touch with the tour. However, SWAMP is able to charge host sites a higher package fee than AFA and Media Study/Buffalo because the Texas Arts Commission subsidizes some participating sites.

The Foreign Correspondence show, which focuses on media in Central America, was organized by video artist Skip Blumberg as a direct response to his own experiences in exhibition tours. Said Edin Velez, "Skip is putting together a good yardstick. He's making sure publicity should be done, that there are proper viewing circumstances, etc. Since he's lived through all those nightmares, he has a master list of things that have to be done: viewing, working with community groups to get an audience—just common sense which no one thinks of." Blumberg paid artists *their* purchase price for a one-year contract in New York State. A producer *cum* liaison is sent out to each host site two days ahead of the show to take care of all the advance and detail work, including special screenings, interviews, and quality control over the projection circumstances. Each site receives a packet of support materials from Blumberg at Central Curating: program notes, seven pages of instructions on how to use volunteer labor, black-and-white photo stills and a master poster.

It shouldn't be incumbent upon artists to organize their own exhibitions. But implicit in this problem is the dual function of the media centers which organizes these tours. On the one hand, media centers exist to serve the interests of artists. But as artists-in-residence sponsors or programmers, they also embody management—the second party to a contract. In a perfect world, media centers would fulfill both functions without contradicting their relationship with artists. But severe underfunding and understaffing is the rule, making mutual communication and professionalism crucial to the trust factor. ■

JULY/AUGUST 1984

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# How to Succeed in Distribution Without Even Signing

It's possible to open a film theatrically without a distributor's backing. But the road isn't easy, and it doesn't necessarily lead to riches.

SUSAN LINFIELD

Even in this age of cable, home videocassette and other electronic technologies, it is theatrical exhibition—that opening in a “real” theater with a “real” audience—which remains the *sine qua non* for many independents (despite the fact that the “real” money is to be made in the ancillary markets). Is a distributor's backing necessary for a theatrical opening? No, as evidenced by such films as *Burden of Dreams*, *When the Mountains Tremble* and *Vortex*, all of which were opened, and sometimes theatrically distributed, by the filmmakers themselves.

Some do-it-yourself films have played in 20 cities; others, in only one or two. Some filmmakers are ideologically, or at least artistically, committed to the control which self-distribution offers; others sign with a distributor as soon as

they can. Some filmmakers who open their own films have long track records; for others, it is their first feature.

But there are often certain similarities between these films, as the following four case studies show. It is not coincidental that two of them—*Seeing Red* and *Burroughs*—opened at the New York Film Festival, while another—*The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*—played at Telluride. All of them played in New York, whether or not they could make any money there. And, whether their experience was imposed or voluntary, the words which these and other filmmakers used time and again to describe theatrical self-distribution were “exhausting,” “debilitating” and “overwhelming.”

## THE FIRST TIME

The film's first benefit—sold out in five days—was at San Francisco's 1800-seat Castro Theatre, and was followed two weeks later by a playdate at Mel Novikoff's 400-seat Clay Theater. Reichert and Klein chose San Francisco because of their political and personal contacts there (five of the film's protagonists live in the Bay area), the city's “excellent theaters and theater owners,” and its political atmosphere (“along with Seattle and New York, it's the most open-minded city in the country,” Reichert claimed).

“A lot of thought went into choosing our first city,” Reichert said. “You've got to do well in that first city—get good press and good box office. The momentum will carry over. But if you flop, your film will get a bad reputation.” Unlike many other filmmakers who premiere at the New York Film Festival, Reichert and Klein specifically wanted to avoid a New York opening until they had “learned how to handle the film.”

They wanted to wait two weeks between the benefit and the Clay opening in order to publicize the film through word-of-mouth and the press. But although they used that time to distribute “thousands of leaflets,” hold press screenings, give interviews and even appear on TV, Reichert now feels that the two-week hiatus was too long and led to a diminishing of momentum. And, ironically, their San Francisco grosses actually suffered because of the benefit's “incredible success”—too many people came to the benefit, not enough to the film. “We gave away too many tickets,” Reichert said. Now, Reichert and Klein plan smaller benefits—500-600 people instead of 1800.

## “BUSTING OUR CHOPS”

The film's advertising budget for its first week in San Francisco was \$4500—“a modest outlay,” Reichert said. “We made up the rest by busting our chops.” Novikoff contributed 10-15% of the advertising costs and fronted the rest of the money (a common practice in many cities but rare in New York, which Reichert described as “the killer”). Their deal with Novikoff was 90/10 with a 60% “floor” (that is, the filmmakers were guaranteed at least 60% of the grosses) the first week, with a diminishing floor for each successive week. [For an explana-

## SEEING RED: THE BENEFITS OF A POLITICAL FILM



Julia Reichert's and Jim Klein's *Seeing Red: Stories of American Communists* was the first film to sell out at the 1983 New York Film Festival (the film had previously been screened at Telluride). After the festival, the filmmakers received at least six offers from various distributors. But Reichert was determined to reserve the film's educational rights for New Day, a non-theatrical distribution collective of which she is a co-founder—rights which no commercial distributor was willing to forgo. “They thought it was a risky film theatrically, because of its subject matter,” Reichert said. “They liked it, but they were scared.” So Reichert and Klein—directors of *Union Maids* and *Methadone: An American Way of Dealing*—decided to become theatrical

distributors for the first time in their careers. Now Reichert describes do-it-yourself theatrical distribution as “reinventing the wheel.”

For both political and commercial reasons the filmmakers decided that, wherever possible, they would premiere the film as a benefit for a local political group and then launch its theatrical run. In San Francisco, they benefitted the Democratic Socialists of America and *Socialist Review* magazine; in New York, Media Network; in Cincinnati, the Cincinnati Film Society; in Boston, the Star Film Library. Reichert (as well as some of the people in the film) has travelled throughout the country to be on hand for each benefit.

Above: *Seeing Red* grossed \$75,000 in New York, but directors Reichert and Klein didn't make a profit. “There's very little way to win in New York,” Reichert says.



tion of the "straight" 90/10 deal, see below.)

The film was "locked" into a two-week run at the Clay—regardless of its grosses, it could only stay there for two weeks. It then moved over to the Lumiere Theatre—and its weekly grosses promptly dropped from \$10,000 to \$3500. "A moveover is very difficult," Reichert said. "Be suspicious when an exhibitor suggests it. You always lose momentum." The film played for two weeks at the Lumiere. At the same time, it opened at Ben Myron's Northside Theater in Berkeley, where it played for nine weeks, probably its most successful playdate. "We netted close to \$10,000 in Berkeley, but probably only \$2000-3000 in San Francisco," Reichert said.

With the help of its New York Film Festival screening and an Academy Award nomination, *Seeing Red* has gone on to become one of the most widely distributed documentaries in recent years, playing not only in Boston, New York and Los Angeles but also in Yellow Springs, Ohio, Petaluma, California and Lincoln, Nebraska. (The film hit the *Variety* charts for at least five weeks.) Reichert called the New York Film Festival and the Academy Award nomination "more important than I would ever have guessed. The New York Film Festival puts your film above the pack a little, gets your foot in the door. And [exhibitors] love the Academy Award nomination for their ads. These things also determine how much space you get in the newspaper—to get a feature instead of just a review takes something like an Academy Award nomination."

#### A GUESSING GAME

Reichert and Klein hired a professional booker as a consultant in choosing playdates. "We wouldn't have been able to do it without him," she said. Nevertheless, choosing theaters is somewhat of a guessing game; in Los Angeles the film played at the Brentwood, which Reichert described as "a real dud, probably the worst theater in the world." Whenever possible, she has travelled with the film: "We always end up making more money in places we've been to than places we haven't. But it's really time-consuming." In smaller cities, such as San Diego, she has worked with the theater's manager to set up press screenings and call critics. In larger cities like Boston and New York, she has hired professional publicists. She has found that exhibitors are "just as interested in seeing your ad slicks, trailer and posters as your film. They figure if you have a good ad campaign, there's a good chance the film will make money."

Ironically, the film has netted far more money for its directors in smaller cities such as Palo Alto than larger ones like New York or San Francisco. In fact, despite the fact that it played at Walter Reade's New Yorker Theater for six weeks—"a tremendous success"—and grossed about \$75,000, Reichert and Klein actually lost money in New York because of the high costs of advertising and the "typical [New York] 90/10 deal." (In New York, most first-run exhibitors offer the filmmaker [or distributor] 90% of a film's gross receipts after the theater's expenses—called the "house nut"—have been paid; in addition, the filmmaker pays all advertising costs. Since the

New Yorker's nut is \$6450, and Reichert said that advertising costs for the first week were \$13,000, the film's healthy first-week \$19,000 gross didn't do much for Reichert and Klein. By the fourth week it was grossing \$10,000, although the nut, of course, remained the same.)

"Financially, there's very little way to win in New York," Reichert said. "Yet the New York grosses are the most important in the country. Other theaters want to know, 'What did you do in New York?'" A New York opening also ensures greater attention in the national press—along with "the greatest ability to flop. The New York critics are the most difficult." (In what must surely be one of the more bizarre chapters in the history of film criticism, the *New*

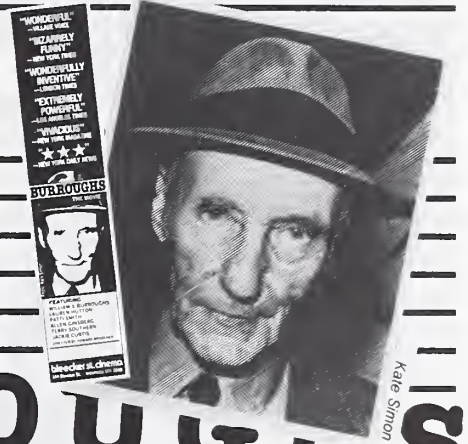
*York Times* imposed an almost total blackout on the film at the time of its New York Film Festival screening, despite the paper's standard practice of printing a full-length review for all features shown at the festival.)

There are now approximately 20 16mm prints of *Seeing Red* in theatrical distribution (the filmmakers had planned to do a 35mm blow-up if they won the Academy Award, but they now feel it's "too risky and expensive"). At the time of this writing, 10 more playdates were planned. Yet, despite the film's relative success, Reichert said she "wouldn't advise people to get into theatrical self-distribution. I don't hate it, but I never want to do it again. It's a tremendous effort, an incredible burden and responsibility."

## BURROUGHS: THE COMPETITION'S HEATING UP

# BURROUGHS

THE MOVIE DIRECTED BY HOWARD BROOKNER



Howard Brookner, an NYU film school grad, essentially "fell into" self-distribution when his first film, *Burroughs* (an anti-nostalgic portrait of Beat writer William S. Burroughs) played at the 1983 New York Film Festival. But now he's getting out.

After the film festival screening—and an extremely good review in the *New York Times*—Brookner was approached by various exhibitors, including Sid Geffen, owner of the Bleecker Street and Carnegie Hall Cinemas. "The film was selling itself, so I decided to go without a distributor," said Brookner. "It was easily accessible in its subject matter—you didn't have to explain what it was about, as with a narrative." Or, as Brookner's partner Sarah Lindemann said, "Either a theater owner has heard of Burroughs or he hasn't."

Geffen offered Brookner a straight 90/10 deal, but advanced advertising costs and "a few thousand dollars up front." After an opening night premiere at the Carnegie Hall Cinema featuring a reading by Burroughs, the film played for five weeks at the Bleecker and then moved over to the Bleecker's "mini-house," the Agee Room. Brookner also opened the film in San Francisco (again, at the Clay Theatre), Boston, Minneapolis, St. Louis, Chicago, Los

Angeles ("a bomb") and other cities. ("For this film, forget the South," said Lindemann.)

Although Brookner hired a professional publicist, to a great extent he relied on Burroughs himself to garner publicity for the film. *Burroughs'* release was timed to coincide with the author's 70th birthday and the publication of his new novel, *The Place of Dead Roads*. Brookner also plastered New York with huge, somber black-and-white posters of Burroughs. Outside of New York, he relied on the exhibitors themselves to publicize the film, although he supplied all materials.

#### MORE POWER OR LESS?

Asked about the advantages of self-distribution, Lindemann replied, "For a first film, you want to get shown in certain places. With a distributor, you never know if that's really happening; this way, we do." (This is also the reason Les Blank chose to theatrically distribute *Burden of Dreams* himself. According to Chris Simon, distribution manager of Blank's company Flower Films, "We were afraid that another distributor wouldn't give it enough publicity, or the type of publicity it needed, and that if it weren't successful at first, it would just end up gathering dust on a shelf.")

Above: *Burroughs*, a first feature by Howard Brookner, premiered at the New York Film Festival and then played in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Minneapolis: "For this film, forget the South."



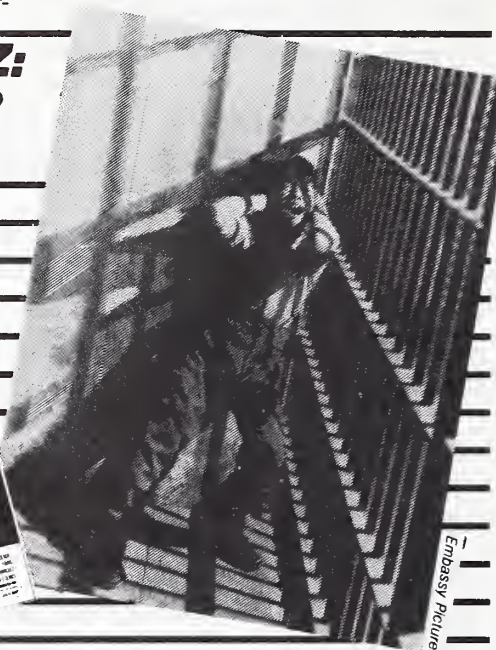
But Lindemann also pointed out that self-distribution entails a certain *loss* of power for the filmmaker. "There's a lot of competition this year: a lot of quality independents are competing for a few screens," she said. "In that situation, the independent with a big distributor behind him has more clout. We have no clout in terms of getting paid or booked. We're at the mercy of exhibitors." (According to *Variety*, in the first quarter of 1984 the majors released 30 films, as against 44 independent releases, 22 subtitled imports and four classics divisions films.)

There are now four 16mm prints of *Burroughs* in distribution, one of which is being cir-

culated by the Landmark Theater chain. "It didn't make economic sense to blow up the film," Lindemann said. "We lost maybe eight to 10 small markets, like Ann Arbor, but we can hit them non-theatrically."

Even on this relatively small scale, however, Brookner has found that self-distribution involves "an amazing amount of time and details. Press kits, releases, mailing prints, getting them back... it's a full-time job, an amazing amount of work." He is currently negotiating with various distributors to sell both the film's non-theatrical and theatrical rights.

## GREGORIO CORTEZ: TO A DISTRIBUTOR AND BACK AGAIN



The producers of *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* won what many independent filmmakers only dream of—distribution by a Hollywood company which bought their film for a hefty six-figure sum. One year later, however, the filmmakers have regained the rights to their film, and are again distributing it themselves.

*Cortez*, a narrative film based on a true story of Mexican-Anglo conflict in Texas at the turn of the century, was never a "typical" independent production. It had a "name" director (Robert M. Young), a SAG cast and *American Playhouse* funding.

*Cortez* was shot in 1981 for a scheduled *American Playhouse* airdate in late June of 1982. But Edward Olmos, the film's star, and others involved in the production wanted to prove the film's theatrical viability before it acquired a "TV movie stigma," according to Bob Hoffman, a producer's representative for the film. In early June, 1982, Olmos "four-walled" (rented) a theater in San Antonio for \$5000 for one week, relying "strictly on word-of-mouth" to publicize the film; by the week's end he had almost recouped his investment.

In September and October, Olmos, Hoffman and Tom Bower, the film's co-star, presented free screenings of *Cortez* on Saturday mornings at the Los Feliz theater in Hollywood. Again

they relied on word-of-mouth, hoping to prove enough audience interest in the film to attract a studio's attention. But, said Hoffman, "there were no serious offers."

### EMBASSY PICK-UP

People in the film community were, however, "getting wind" of *Cortez*. Charles Champlin of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote an article on the film and its stars' attempts to show it; the *LA Weekly* also gave it a favorable review. Then Ross LaManna of the business affairs department at Embassy Pictures saw *Cortez* at a USC screening and began interesting people at Embassy in the film. According to Hoffman, Embassy owner Norman Lear then saw the film and "loved" it; in April, 1983, Embassy bought the picture for \$500,000.

Embassy originally planned to release the film in 40 markets, but then decided to test it in San Francisco and El Paso. According to Hoffman, "it did real well—not because of Embassy's [own] efforts, but because of the opportunity they gave us to carry the ball. They bankrolled us in putting together a grassroots network, spending \$85,000 for promotion in the Hispanic community." A six-person team, which included Olmos, Bower and Hoffman, devised

an extensive list of Hispanic community organizations and centers throughout the country, and showed the film for free in the Hispanic community in the spring preceding its theatrical release.

In August, 1983, the film opened in San Francisco to what Hoffman called "phenomenal" grosses—\$22,000 in the first weekend—and played there for 15 weeks, grossing \$500,000. After its screening at the Telluride Film Festival that September, Embassy was "deluged with offers." It played in Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, Boston, and 10 cities in Texas, among other places.

### NOW THE BAD NEWS

But mistakes were made. In October, the film opened in New York at the upscale Cinema I—a theater "two times too big," Hoffman said. He added that although Cinema I offered a "five-figure advance," the film was advertised for only one week before its playdate. "It was a mistake of incredible magnitude," Hoffman said. "It was a premature opening. If it had been handled differently, it might have done well in New York. Look at *El Norte*—which isn't a better film." Hoffman said the film also suffered from a negative review by Janet Maslin in the *New York Times* and competition from films coming out of the New York Film Festival.

The problem, said Hoffman, was "the fundamental difference between how they [Embassy] and we wanted to approach the film." Embassy released the film into 30 cities within a three-week period, spending large amounts on promotion. The film could not, evidently, sustain such a blanket strategy. "Our notion was to go very slowly, to put it into right-sized theaters and give it plenty of time," Hoffman said.

### A NEW DEAL

By November, Hoffman said, Embassy felt it was "just trading dollars. They didn't want to spend money on it any more, and took it out of service." In March, 1984, Olmos, Bower and Hoffman negotiated a deal with Embassy whereby they would subdistribute the picture, giving Embassy 25% of rental revenues.

There are now 10 prints of *Cortez* in circulation. Its current distributors are implementing their original strategy: "going into cities with very little money, making very reasonable deals with theater owners, like a \$250 guarantee, getting 40-50% of ticket sales after the advance, and devising a cooperative ad budget." The film recently opened in Chicago to "pretty good but not great business." In Santa Barbara it recently grossed \$8500 in 12 days, with \$1200 spent on promotion.

"It's small potatoes—nobody's getting rich on it," Hoffman said. "You do it because you want to get the film out there. Do-it-yourself openings are viable, but they have to be modelled to particular regions. *Cortez* is indicative, in both a positive and negative way, of that. In the places—like New York—where we didn't go in, spend time and do good work, we just didn't do well."

Above: *Gregorio Cortez* was picked up by Embassy Pictures, which quickly released the film into 30 cities. Now the film's stars are subdistributing it: "Our notion is to go very slowly and give it plenty of time."



# WORLD OF TOMORROW: THE FILM FORUM OPENING



"The film was opened in New York basically for fun—and to pay debts," said Lance Bird, co-director with Tom Johnson of *The World of Tomorrow*, a documentary on the 1939 New York World's Fair and the optimistic world-view it embodied. The film played for two weeks in Manhattan's downtown Film Forum last March, and Bird hopes that *Tomorrow* will follow the path of such films as *When the Mountains Tremble* and *The Atomic Cafe*, which were picked up by distributors following their Film Forum runs. So far, though, despite its positive reviews in both the New York and national press, the film has failed to gain either a distributor or widespread theatrical release (which Bird attributed to what he called its "offbeat" character).

"I was intrigued by the Film Forum as a frame for films," said Bird. "It's really a pleasant place to see movies, and I was convinced that we could bring in audiences who don't ordinarily go there." The Film Forum has what Bird described as a "continuous audience of young film buffs who regularly follow [the Forum's] schedule," but Bird said *Tomorrow* managed to attract an older crowd.

## A BETTER DEAL

The Forum is one of the few New York theaters to depart from the 90/10 deal. (Julia Reichert claimed that *Seeing Red* would have made money if it had played there instead of at the New Yorker.) According to spokesperson Janet Perlberg, for a standard two-week locked engagement the Forum guarantees the filmmaker \$1000 against 30% of gross ticket income; the theater also pays all advertising costs and handles publicity, guaranteeing at least two press conferences. Perlberg said that *Tomorrow* grossed \$22,400, making it the fifth highest-grossing film for the theater.

The Forum has well-established press contacts in New York (the *Times* generally reviews anything it plays). "You don't need a publicist if you have the Film Forum; they do much of that work," Bird said. But he stressed the importance

of midtown screenings (some critics evidently don't like going downtown) and a carefully constructed press kit which includes biographies, a synopsis and the film's history, "so that if the film does intrigue somebody, they have enough material to write an article." Bird's press kit also included about 10 stills—"important, because some publications will only run an exclusive photo." And, he added, in choosing stills a filmmaker should ask, "Is this photo gripping? Does it help explain my film?" Good stills, Bird said, often determine how much space a review will be allotted.

Reviews (good ones, that is) are "absolutely crucial," said Bird. "The only countermeasure to a review is buying advertising. Our reviews probably added up to \$100,000." Bird and Johnson also publicized the film by sending postcards to 11,000 members of the Film Forum's mailing list.

Bird said that do-it-yourself theatrical distribution "gives you insight into that [commercial] side of the business. Everybody should do it at least once. But it's enormously time-consuming—and boring." *The World of Tomorrow* has yet to become a lucrative, or widely seen, film. But, Bird added, "There's a Pygmalion aspect to this: Can I take a little movie which shouldn't do well in theaters and make it into a success?"

## POSTSCRIPT

Among the "heroes" who emerged in interviewing filmmakers for this piece were exhibitors Bill Quigley of the Walter Reade Organization (New York) and San Franciscans Mel Novikoff of Surf Theatres and Ben Myron of Premiere Cinemas, all of whom were praised for their interest in and sensitivity towards independent films. The *New York Times* emerged as either an angel or devil, depending on who was talking. The universal "villains" of theatrical self-distribution appear to be New York's advertising costs and the entire City of Los Angeles, which was derided time and again by various filmmakers as one of the worst places in the country to exhibit an independent film.

Above: *The World of Tomorrow* did well at the Film Forum, but hasn't seen much theatrical action since then. But its director says there's a "Pygmalion aspect" to distributing the film.

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## FESTIVALS

## Tokyo Video: Hard to Top

REYNOLD WEIDENAAR

From a cursory scan of the numbers all the way to the dazed and surreal perspective of the winners' circle, the Tokyo Video Festival is not easy to top. It gathers the most entries of any video festival (1176 in 1983) and offers the most generous top prize (\$2500 in cash, a 15-day all-expense-paid trip to Japan, an 18-pound trophy, a framed certificate, and a Japan Air Lines flight bag).

In Tokyo I checked into the New Otani, Asia's largest and busiest hotel, and thankfully one of the most bilingual. The room was outfitted with a cable TV that offered Japanese networks plus English movies, business and tourist channels. There was soft-core porn and programs extolling the methods and achievements of Japanese labor and management. Dubs of the latter were offered for sale at the end of each program—simply dial a special hotel number and the cost of the  $\frac{3}{4}$ " souvenirs would be conveniently added to your hotel bill.

Unfortunately, the Tokyo Video Festival does not provide ideal conditions for all screenings. Tapes were indeed shown to good effect in the main auditorium of the Sogetsu Kaikan, using 30" monitors and a good sound system. However, distractions plagued the half-dozen satellite stations set up in a heavily-trafficked area just outside the auditorium, where tapes could be screened on demand. These consisted of 15" monitors with seating for six or eight. Dubs had been recorded with mono AGC sound, the headphones didn't seal out the energetic ambient noise, and the full-level of overhead lighting was also somewhat annoying.

Nevertheless, the tapes I viewed at the small facility managed to transcend these circumstances. In fact, it was a memorable introduction to Japanese video, whose essence is its use as an everyday tool, something still quite rare in America. The Japanese use video to produce some of the simplest yet most profoundly moving documentaries I have ever seen. *Mother's Day Without Sound* by Akio Wakamatsu traced one day in the life of a deaf and dumb woman; it was made by her likewise handicapped husband. Their two children can hear and speak. The strength and happiness of this family, and especially the rich mother-child relationships, shone through with great force and fresh beauty as they went through their day using imaginative gadgets and performing special duties to overcome and compensate for their handicaps.

The festival's Video Letter Exchange category is a direct outgrowth of using video in daily life. Its idea is to present two-way communication; both the message from the sender and the return

message had to be submitted together. *Cooking Letter* by Hitoshi and Chieko Ishii displayed a warmth and wit that easily transcended the language barrier. Mrs. Ishii was going to take a trip, and wanted to help her husband look after himself while she was away. Letter I: She taped herself while preparing a meal, giving solicitous and sympathetic instructions all the while. Letter II: Mr. Ichii taped himself struggling to follow her instructions while watching Letter I on the monitor. His fumbling attempts to prepare the same dish met with mixed success, and the contrapuntal discrepancies between the two performances were often hilarious.

The 70 tapes screened at the festival were documented in a small leaflet printed in either Japanese or English, depending on the tape's origin (no translations). It listed the tapes of Americans Sally A. Simmons, Joe Valencic, Cecelia Condit, Laurie McDonald, Larry Hawks, Melanie Sherwood, Bob Snyder, Gary Hill, Peter McCandless, Megan Roberts and Raymond Ghirardo, Dick Daniels and Avi Engel. But for some reason this leaflet is not distributed to all entrants, with the frustrating result that they have no way of knowing whether or not they were screened.

As the festival ceremony drew near, the most wearying phase of the trip began. Eleven press interviews, each lasting up to several hours, were held over three days. Two were for English-language publications, the rest Japanese. All of the interviewers had done their homework—one had viewed my tape six times—and their questions were generally informed and probing. By the end of the third day, however, I was working very hard to disguise my fatigue at constantly listening to myself talk about that damn tape.

The awards ceremony lasted nearly four hours, and consisted of some refreshingly frank

and candid discussions by the judges about the comparative merits and, yes, faults of the works up for awards. I was humbled to learn that only one of the eight judges had originally proposed my tape, and in fact, two pairs had already coalesced in support of other candidates. The inner workings of the selection process were revealed quite openly and naturally. Some of the award winners who were present were even quizzed about their works by the judges. An educational air emerged and the feeling of a media extravaganza subsided. The event was covered by Japanese television, and news reports appeared that night and the next day. Print coverage was extensive and the public response in the 300-seat hall genuinely enthusiastic. A reception after the ceremony teemed with people, and there were dozens of questions and hundreds of snapshots.

Five American tapes won awards: *American Survival—Philadelphia Squatters* by Jon Alpert, *Nuclear Outpost II* by Jim Russell, *Shifts* by Richard Bloes, *Tall Wheat* by Carl Davis and Susan Banyas and my own *Love of Line, of Light and Shadow: The Brooklyn Bridge*. The prize structure makes entering worthwhile: there are 31 prizes—two top awards with identical \$2500 prizes (Grand Prize and JVC President's Award), four at \$1000 plus a color video camera, 12 at \$500, and 13 at \$150.

Once the festival was over and the highly-programmed schedule loosened up, I visited a Video Information Center (VIC) in Tokyo, which is a public access center maintained by JVC (known as Nihon Victor in Japan). Established to encourage the public's use of video, it offers both JVC video salesrooms and public professional amateur production and postproduction facilities. There is a 2" studio, an editing/dubbing room (all formats), a telecine room (8mm/16mm film and 35mm slide transfer to 2",  $\frac{3}{4}$ " or  $\frac{1}{2}$ " ), an A-V production room, a video/audio seminar room, and a videotape viewing/lending library. Although not all are as completely equipped, there are 21 VICs throughout Japan, plus seven in Western Europe, one in Australia and one in Honolulu.

There does not appear to be a strong independent professional video/film community in Japan, which is somewhat surprising given the quality and quantity of video technology there. Most independent activity is on the amateur level. Distribution opportunities are also more limited than ours, although winning festival tapes may be screened on demand at any VIC in Japan for one year. There are no royalties for the videomaker, however, as consent to these screenings is a condition of entry.

Fortunately, the VICs do not satisfy all of the national demand to see Tokyo Video Festival winners. Fujiko Nakaya, a Japanese video artist, operates the Scan Video Gallery in Tokyo, and also has a distribution company known as Processart Inc. She distributes a number of American video artists in Japan. The artist must ship a dub to Japan whenever a sale is made; although this means more work for the videomaker than if the distributor made the dubs, it also keeps the quality higher and allows



Eastern hospitality: Reynold Weidenaar capped the \$2500 grand prize in Tokyo.



the artist to keep tabs on when and where his tapes go.

Notification of winning the Tokyo Video Festival came to me only two-and-a-half weeks before departure. The festival evidently wants to keep the results a secret until the awards ceremony, but they seemed to be a pretty open secret once I got there, and a little more notice would have helped a lot. If you do go, here are some recommendations: 1) Learn at least a few Japanese phrases with the aid of a cassette course or a native speaker. The Japanese will be genuinely complimented and impressed; 2) Read *Empire of Signs* by Roland Barthes, a semiological treatment of Japanese symbolism; 3) Learn Japanese hand signals which differ significantly from our own. They are shown in some guidebooks and in widely distributed tourist literature available in Japan.

*Entries to the 7th Tokyo Video Festival, sponsored by JVC (Victor Company of Japan) are due September 10. Division I invites "general" and "art-inspired" tapes; division II is for video letter exchange. No entry fee. Contact: JVC Company of America, 41 Slater Drive, Elmswood Park, NJ 07407.* ■

*Reynold Weidenaar, grand prize winner at the 1983 Tokyo Video Festival, recently received a full-time appointment as Assistant Professor of Film and Television at New York University.*

### **San Francisco Video: Four Years of Innovation**

Video exhibition is a queer thing. As with any other budding medium, the methods and styles of proper display for video art are an unfolding and often aggravating revelation. It is not simply a process of re-thinking appropriate exhibition, but also of gaining adequate insight into a particular work to determine its audience, context and aesthetic demands. If one wanted to praise the San Francisco International Video Festival, its innovative and fluid exploration of meaningful exhibition would be foremost. In fact, festival director Stephen Ageststein says he founded the SFIVF "in response to the way video art was being exhibited. It was time for a new language and audience."

Since its inception in 1980, the festival has presented a provocative array of video works in an enormous number of often disparate venues, each tailored to the specific sensibility of the video piece itself. That is not to say that each exhibition premise has met with rousing success; some works have floundered miserably in mismatched settings, while others have risen above the aspirations of their curator.

Under Ageststein's directorship, the San Francisco International Video Festival has successfully mounted four 10-day events. The earlier years were marked by a bravura and showmanship that—at a certain level—eclipsed the video works themselves. But a more sober, realistic attitude gained dominance as the audience and the stature of the SFIVF grew.

The first year's festival featured 33 ambitious shows in 17 different locations with works by such far-ranging artists as Peter D'Agostino,

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Tony Oursler/SFIVF



*Son of Oil* showed in San Francisco; the festival has attempted to forge "a new language and audience in response to the way video art was being exhibited."

Gary Hill, Susan Mogul, General Idea, Howard Fried, Terry Fox, Shalom Gorewitz, Tony Oursler, Les Levine, Ilene Segalove, the Vasulkas, Michael Smith and Sanborn/Fitzgerald. Ultimately, there were 52 artists represented—24 selected from the 189 entries and 27 invited. In a tradition that holds fast, each artist was paid a \$100 honorarium, creating quite a financial burden that first time out.

In the succeeding years, many people claimed that video art, as the embryonic form of the seventies, required a certain seclusion from the world of criticism. An unruly, amorphous medium, it was vulnerable precisely because it was undefined. Attacks leveled at it were cloaked in the language of film and photography. By 1980, video art had come into its own as a form with a defined and deserved niche within the great art world and one which had also developed a coterie of video critics working equally hard to hone their critical tools. "Video art had matured enough so that it had something to offer an enlarged audience," Agetstein states. "And the artists had something to gain from the response they would inevitably receive."

In those first years, Agetstein's festival programming covered the entire gamut of venues, from the stolid monitor in a whitened gallery through the smoke-infested halls of local cabarets to the great intruder, television broadcast. Into this visual mulch he threw performance artists such as Mitchell Kriegman, Elizabeth Chitty and Chris Burden to generate a sense of theatrics. The motive behind all the pyrotechnics was two-fold, for Agetstein—and his hard-working colleague, Wendy Garfield—saw the festival as both a great experiment and a commodity that had to be sold to audience and press alike. "Entertainment was accented the first few years. The press ate it up. And it's easier to sell to the audience." The print media

attention has been bountiful, but usually falling into a category Agetstein describes as "generic." "It gets boring, year after year," he complains, "to receive press that says 'television can be art.'" The audience has also been large, exposing thousands of the curious and unwary to that elusive, demanding and contagious art form.

"Video artists have been so hungry," says Agetstein, "that they show their work at any opportunity. Now video art is at a stage where the artist must make decisions. An artist must control the way in which his work is viewed to truly communicate. Otherwise it is bathroom art." Following his theory of communication and context, Agetstein has placed Target Video's *Underground Forces* in a rock club and screened Juan Downey's arid *Sinage* on a ferry crossing the San Francisco Bay. He has programmed Meredith Monk's 28-minute *Ellis Island* for a KQED broadcast and showed Les Levine's *Gossip* in the dingy living room of Jet Wave Gallery. Each setting enhanced the video by sensitizing the audience to the appropriate intentions, which can easily be abused by television's portability and the viewer's reflexes.

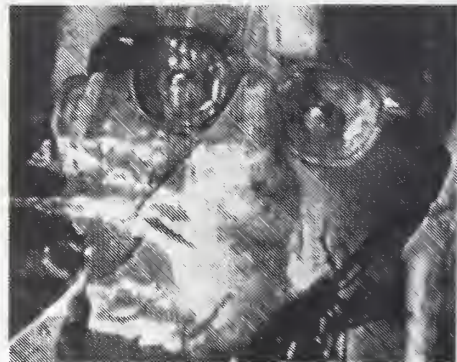
Agetstein is least successful is his occasional desire to make video art a more comfortable experience by catering to the (alleged) lack of discipline and imagination in the festival's audience. At the New Video Gallery, the SFIVF's recently established home, tables and chairs are often randomly strewn around the room, their alignment to the monitors oblique. Counterpoised, an audience aligned in symmetrical rows is tacitly told: "Sit there in the chair and pay close attention or you're going to miss it." But Agetstein insists, "You're not going to get it anyway and if you do it's not a great work of art. A relaxed environment implies that you're not expected to necessarily understand [the work]." However, this lessening of expectation has been

more conducive to the chatter and consumption of readily-available beverages that seem a prerequisite of such a festive atmosphere. The trap of making art "fun" has lured many an art purveyor into its steely jaws, maiming the art more than the purveyor.

Last year's San Francisco International Video Festival—the first to be predominantly housed in its own gallery—continued the procession of video luminaries. Tony Labat, Les Levine, Juan Downey, Doug Hall, Chip Lord, Gary Hill, Shigeko Kubota and Jon Alpert were represented as well as a bevy of lesser-known artists. But here's the rub. Of 310 submitted works, the three jurors selected only 11 videotapes. An additional 14 works were invited, many of them sight unseen. Pursuing that elusive "cross-section of video activity from the preceding year," the festival odds are clearly better for invited artists than for those who have to delve into their coffers for the \$15 entry fee. It also presupposes that any work by a brand-name artist is valuable.

The San Francisco International Video Festival has been fairly careful to avoid classification of work. "Most years we've had no categories for entries, because we felt that they imposed false definitions on a vulnerable, maturing medium," Agetstein declares. "Last year, we did have categories, on the insistence of many people. But most chose to enter under the general category." Innovative, critically sound video art has dominated the programming with little room for documentary. Five documentarians were evident in the last festival—Jon Alpert, Tom Rubinitz, Aron Ranen, Jeanne Wolf/Shep Morgan and Joel Gold/Maxi Cohen—bringing non-fiction greater representation than in past events.

Ultimately, all accepted video works are categorized, but by their method of delivery. "There are many videotapes which deal with criticism and aesthetics in a manner or with a pacing which will function only in a gallery environment," Agetstein says. "There is the bar or the cabaret, which is of course an excellent format for music tapes, though any work which can withstand the sound competitive nature of this environment would do well to play there." And there is the perennial broadcast which, Agetstein feels, is not for all works. "Some are not technically suitable, or the tape is not appropriate for



SFIVF entry *Einstein: A Nuclear Comedy*. "Video was vulnerable precisely because it was undefined."

Les Levine/SFIVF



a family's living room, or (most importantly) they will not stand up to the competition of the channel selector."

However, the broadcast of a videotape, usually on KQED, means more than expanded audiences and appropriate venues. It means additional monies for the artist, monies culled from the broadcaster's bankroll. Agetstein believed from the beginning that artists must get paid, and he backed up his belief with cold cash. "Curators were making reputations at the expense of the artist," he insists. But Agetstein's argument goes much deeper. Though a committed festival director, he also accepts his integral role as entrepreneur and recognizes that the production of art, as well as its exhibition, is mired in finance. Grants to the tune of \$40,000 help subsidize the festival's overhead, but Agetstein feels that earned income is essential. "Our gate receipts now exceed our honorariums. The marketplace will support art. That's important," he declares. This importance affects both the festival and the artist, because it implies that the audience finds them valuable and worthy of pecuniary attention. Then too, we mustn't forget that while money can't buy you love it can certainly buy you survival.

Agetstein's obsession with equitable payment for an artist's work has driven him to take controversial measures regarding SFIVF's own Travelling Show. In a death-defying announcement, he states, "A major problem in the distribution of this package [the Travelling Show] continues to be the availability of 'underpriced' shows featuring many of the same artists. For this reason, and after much consideration, SFIVF has decided that works cannot be accepted for the Travelling Show if they are featured in other 'underpriced' packages." He goes on to discuss a "fair fee structure" and the ever-elusive "market value." The announcement, originally published with the 1983 entry form, never gets down to real dollars or the naming of names, and its tone is a bit patriarchal. But the problem it plaintively ponders (and daringly so) is real and relevant to an art form that has grown beyond the stage where mere exposure was considered payment enough. However, by excluding people from the Travelling Show on these grounds, Agetstein is trying to impose his own unilateral solution when it is the artists who should ultimately have the final say on where and when their work is shown.

Innovation and controversy are two qualities that make for good art. The San Francisco International Video Festival has shied away from neither in its efforts to bring video art to an ever-expanding audience. Powered by grants and whatever support it can muster from gate receipts, SFIVF now conducts a weekly screening series, publishes the quarterly magazine *Send*, maintains the road show and has recently entered the home distribution market with 1/2" videotapes by Meredith Monk, Nam June Paik and Daniel Reeves. In keeping with the mercurial nature of video art, each subsequent festival presents a new experiment in the exhibition of work. "The festival changes, year by year, because it is responsive to the artist—and we

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translate that responsiveness into the needs of the audience," says Ageststein. Perhaps this year, we'll see a work by Dara Birnbaum screened on the set of a television show? Or Bill Viola's newest piece projected in a pasture? It's hard to say what innovation will arise, but it will probably be appropriate.

—Steve Seid

*Entries to the 1984 San Francisco International Video Festival are due by Aug. 1. Any length and all genres are welcome. Entry fee: \$15. Contact: SFIVF, 1250 17th Street, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 863-8434.* ■

Steve Seid was the editor of the Bay Area Video Coalition's newsletter *Video Networks* and is a freelance writer in San Francisco specializing in video.

## London Film Fest: Making a Deal

*A festival is a place to see and be seen, and, in the best of all possible worlds, an entree into a more lasting mode of distribution. The following is a case study in making a festival work for you. In sharing his personal experience at the 1983 London Film Festival, AIVF member Charles Musser reveals not only the ambience at the National Film Theatre, but also some tips which would work almost anywhere.* —WL

For many festival directors, hearty reviewers, and dedicated distributors, film festivals merge into one long road show, a circuit which never seems to end. If a filmmaker is lucky, he/she is invited to join the show for a year—as an honored guest. For Lizzie Borden (*Born in Flames*), Slava Tsukerman (*Liquid Sky*), Haile Gerima (*Ashes and Embers*) and myself (*Before the Nickelodeon*), our overlapping tours on this circuit were drawing to a close as we came to the British Film Institute's London Film Festival in November-December 1983.

Our London pleasures came in different forms. We could walk into a festival gathering, recognize plenty of faces (remembering the names which came with them was something else) and enjoy the friendly, informal atmosphere which festival organizers Leslie Hardcastle, Ken Wlaschin and Helen Loveridge strove successfully to create. (I particularly appreciated this, since my previous year's anxiety—which had mounted along with *Nickelodeon's* debts—had finally gone to my stomach, which now refused coffee and all alcohol except beer.)

London is not a commercial festival like Cannes or even Berlin. Nor does it assure critical attention, like the New York Film Festival, since too many films are shown for reviews to appear in the London press. A premiere will garner a *Variety* review but that and mention in the BFI magazine *Sight and Sound* are the only guaranteed press. The *Guardian's* Derek Malcolm was the only reviewer for a newspaper to attend screenings regularly. He used his column selectively, noting certain films he thought should be shown on British TV or theatrically released, such as Joel DeMott and Jeffrey Kreines' *Seventeen* and Frederick Wiseman's *The Store*. The festival is committed to maximiz-

ing its contribution to British film culture, which the BFI assiduously cultivates in both domestic and international spheres. It showcases some of the best films financed by British television or produced by the BFI. It also gives the British film community an opportunity to sample a wide diversity of international productions and to exchange addresses (and even an occasional idea!) with visiting filmmakers.

In addition to seeing a lot of films, I used the London Festival as a base to sell *Nickelodeon*. British film culture has been very interested in early cinema and, because we share this interest, I have many ties there. Friends and colleagues were willing to help point me in the right direction. Plans we had made six months before came to fruition. After the BFI acquired theatrical and non-theatrical rights to *Before the Nickelodeon* at the Berlin Festival (which necessitated my stopping in London on the way home from there), it arranged for the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) to open the film in two days after its London Film Festival debut. Attendance wasn't great since the film was running simultaneously with the festival, but the opening did generate enthusiastic reviews in the daily papers. (Important reviews in the Sunday papers unfortunately were nixed by a newspaper strike.) An article I had placed in the British film journal *Framework* also appeared. With limited resources, I created a small event which distinguished the film from the other hundred-plus in the festival. Not only did I have the personal satisfaction of participating in discussions on important aspects of film history, but a context was created which made the purchase of *Nickelodeon* more attractive for British television.

While important parts of the British film community are receptive to American independents, you have to enjoy hanging out if you expect to accomplish much on the business end. The festival period may be the worst time to approach British TV stations. Generally, buyers and commissioning editors avoided the festival except when the films they financed were shown. They see films of cassettes in the safety of their own offices rather risk the ordeal of being besieged by groups of eager filmmakers.

I also had good luck pushing a new documentary project. After many phone calls and much maneuvering I got through to the person I needed to see. He liked the proposal and on the last day of my two-week visit he gave me the desired letter of support (i.e. the prospect of some financing) from Channel 4. (Short-term success nonetheless led to long-term failure on this side of the Atlantic. With a significant portion of the budget in place, CPB routinely turned down my proposal, effectively killing the project.)

While personally friendly and receptive to my project, Channel 4 editors are unhappy with the lack of reciprocity they find in the US. PBS schedules may be filled with British programming, but it's programming of a particular sort, made at the BBC, or to a lesser extent, the ITV. The independent, innovative programming of Channel 4 is not funded, purchased or even shown on American TV. PBS's lack of support

for independents has become an international issue. Unless something changes, a backlash seems likely to occur. Channel 4 support, crucial for many American independents, cannot survive indefinite abuse, something we should remember when making our demands to CPB. (Given this imbalance, friends at the BFI urged me to find an English sales agent. In most cases, British TV will either take or turn down a film regardless of who represents it, but for those films in the gray area, a local agent could make the difference. I didn't comply with their suggestion, but my international TV agent, Devillier-Donegan Associates, represents Channel 4 productions in the US, which may have helped.)

So a year and a half after *Before the Nickelodeon* was completed, my first significant television sale is about to be completed. If London was the last stop for me on the festival circuit, it was in many respects the most satisfying. I am still off coffee, but I can at least drink wine.

—Charles Musser

*After 14 years of programming the National Film Theatre and London Film Festival, Nevada Ken Wlaschin has been repatriated to the US as the new program director of FILMEX. This year, the London Film Festival will be programmed by Derek Malcolm, film critic for the liberal London Guardian, a large circulation daily, second in Britain only to the London Times. He will be looking at films and tapes, preferably on VHS, but otherwise on ¾" until August 3. The London Film Festival accepts feature-length films only, though dramatic and documentary genres are equally well-showcased.*

*In November, after the seventh annual Tyne-side Film Festival, which she has run since 1981, Sheila Whitaker will take up her new role as program director of the National Film Theatre (the home of the London Film Festival). She has said that independents will continue to be well-represented in the Festival in 1985. Contact: Derek Malcolm, London FF, National Film Theatre, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, England; 01-928-3842; telex: 27624.* ■

*Charles Musser is currently working for the American Working Class History Project, which is making a documentary film about the 1877 Railway Strike.*

## CONGRATULATIONS FROM THE INDEPENDENT AND AIVF

THE FOLLOWING  
AMERICAN INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS  
FILMS WERE FEATURED AT THE  
1984 CANNES FILM FESTIVAL:

*In The Critics' Week:*

Billy Woodberry's *BLESS THEIR LITTLE HEARTS*

*In The Director's Fortnight:*

Bette Gordon's *VARIETY*

Jim Jarmusch's *STRANGER THAN*

*PARADISE*

Marisa Silver's *OLD ENOUGH*



## IN BRIEF

This month's additional festivals have been compiled by Deborah Erickson and Wendy Lidell with the help of the FIVF files. **Listings do not constitute an endorsement**, and since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

### Domestic

● **ASIAN AMERICAN INT'L VIDEO FESTIVAL**, December, Asian CineVision will sponsor 7th non-competitive showcase, held last year at NYC's Danceteria; the multi-level nightclub, equipped for 3 simultaneous shows on projection & monitor systems, will probably host 1984 event too. Among 1983's featured works were Nam June Paik's *You Can't Lick Stamps in China* & Taka Iimura's *Video Talking: Back to Back*. Keiko Tsuno, co-founder of NYC's Downtown Community TV Center, presented *Invisible Citizens: Japanese Americans* and Janice Tanaka's 7-monitor installation *Double Think* aroused a lot of excitement; tape uses WWII newsreel images to expose media's effect on Japanese Americans prior to their mass detainment. This well-attended fest hopes for more Japanese entries in 1984, & possibly a touring package of selected works, for which rental fees will be paid. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Nancy Tong or Peter Chow, Asian Cine-Vision, 32 E. Broadway, NY 10002; (212) 925-8685.

● **BAY AREA FILMMAKERS' SHOWCASE**, Co-sponsored by the San Francisco Int'l Film Festival (SFIFF) & the Film Arts Foundation (FAF). 5th non-competitive event presents films in all genres. FAF director & selection committee member Gail Silva reports 42 of 110 entries were screened last year. Her fellow 1983 committeepople were Peter Scarlet of SFIFF & Tom Luddy. 1984's selection panel will include at least 4 reps from SFIFF & 2 from Pacific Film Archives. Showcase '83 featured a tribute to Bruce Connor & afternoon seminars in SF's 1,500-seat Castro Theatre. Gail Silva says, "We show the best of the Bay area, whether the filmmakers are famous [Coppola entered *One from the Heart* in '82] or completely unknown." Deadline: Sept 1. No fee. Contact: Gail Silva, Film Arts Foundation, 2940 16th St. #105, San Francisco CA 94103; (415) 552-8760.

● **CHICAGO INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, November 9-23, took some important steps in 1983 towards improving its handling of films in non-feature competition categories. Documentaries & experimental short subjects, traditionally shown in university classrooms in mid-afternoon were moved to more appropriate venues: docs were screened at the Film Center of the Art Institute of Chicago & experimental shorts were shown in the Chicago Filmmakers screening series. Both Barbara Scharres at the Film Center & Brenda Webb at Chicago Filmmakers, who arranged the screenings with the festival's outgoing executive director, Suzanne McCormick, were enthusiastic about their association with the festival, though both admitted their audiences were small. The festival made its usual fine-print mention of these side-bar screening events on its calendar without mentioning titles or descriptions of films to be shown & the Film Center and Chicago Filmmakers kept box office revenues, but

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neither received any money from the fest. This becomes more ironic when one considers that these very films were entered in the festival with fees ranging from \$35 to \$75. Nor do jury members get paid, according to Jim Taylor, organizer of the short subject jury in '82 and '83. The winning shorts have a better exhibition potential, however, since they may get shown before feature films in the main festival venues.

Feature films fare much better. Selected indie films are billed & screened on equal terms with the foreign fare which takes up the bulk of the festival program. Good press coverage and hob-nobbing with international guests at glitzy events makes the price of admission worth it, if you can live with yet another double standard: while invited films are cajoled into participation, unsolicited entries must pay a whopping \$75 entry fee. But the gold, silver & bronze Hugos awarded in all categories have earned a good reputation, & if you think you have a winner, it may make sense to enter. Keep in mind that this fest has an ongoing penchant for the off-beat. At the time of the his writing, neither the Film Center nor Chicago Filmmakers had been contacted to host 1984 screenings. Categories include feature, animation, documentary, television production, short subject, student, educational, television commercial, video & poster. Entries accepted in 35mm, 16mm and ¾" for video competition. Deadline: September 20. Contact: Michael Kutza,

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● **COORS SOUTHERN IMAGES & VIDEO FEST**, September 29-October 6. First film event is part of 9th Red River Arts Festival, which drew 300,000 people last year. All works relating to the South, completed since Jan. 1, '82 invited to compete in film or video categories. 1st Prize in each is \$500; 2nd: \$200; 3rd: \$100. Judges include 3 directors of Southern arts organizations. Entries in 16mm & ¾". Fee: \$10 for return postage. Deadline: August 10. Contact: Paul Frank or Dee Bustillo, Red River Arts Festival, 101 Milam, Suite 10, Shreveport, LA 71101; (318) 424-4000 (Frank) or (318) 797-4526 (Bustillo).

● **CINE** the Council on International Non-Theatrical Events. Biannual competition awards Golden Eagles to "professional" films & CINE Eagles to "amateur" ones. Winners are then entered in foreign festivals at the maker's expense, & the certificates look very nice on the wall. Final judgment made on the basis of which films will "most suitably represent the US." Accordingly, works which are controversial, or aesthetically or politically radical, are less likely to be selected. Entries in 16 or 35mm. ¾" accepted since 1982. Entry fees range from \$55 to \$110 depending on length. Deadline: August 1. Contact: S.R. Tamhane, Exec. Director, CINE, 1201 16th St. NW, Rm 105, Washington DC 20036; (202) 785-1136.

● **INT'L CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL**, October. 13th event sponsored by the American Center of Films for Children (ACFC). Double Ruby Slipper Awards in 3 categories: animation, short live action & feature, presented by children's & adult juries. 5-city tour of finalists & winners, certificates of participation for all entries. 16 & 35mm works geared to elementary school kids invited, ¾" OK for selection. Entry forms by Aug. 15, prints by Aug. 31. Contact: ACFC, School of Cinema/TV, Univ. of Southern Cal., University Park MC-0111, Los Angeles CA 90089.

● **INT'L FILM & TV FESTIVAL OF NEW YORK**, November. A golden opportunity to pay through the nose & discover the meaning of "the big time." See Ralph Arlyck's *Infestigative* [sic] Report April '82 issue. Arlyck, a charter member of AIVE, alias Festival Man, reports on pin-up girls, potage de champion, & that's not all! Regardless of the quality of the work, all entries receive official, snazzy plaques. Ostentatious, & perfect for impressing the socks off anyone who doesn't know better. Entry: Sept. Contact: Gerald M. Goldberg, President, 251 West 57 St., NY NY 10019; (212) 246-5133.

● **NEW YORK GAY FILM FESTIVAL**, December. Entering its 6th year, this non-competitive fest has been growing by leaps & bounds. Works are screened before enthusiastic audiences at the 500-seat Gramercy Theater; event receives publicity from the *Village Voice* & other liberal publications. Organized by Altermedia's Peter Lowy, fest accepts 16mm, ¾" or ½" (Beta & VHS). Deadline: July 30. No fee. Contact: Altermedia, PO Box 948, Bowling Green Station, NY NY 10274; (212) 273-8829.

● **UNITED BANK DENVER INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, October 18-28. Invitational, non-competitive event presents an interesting selection of films for enthusiastic audiences (20,000 attended over 10 days last year.) Works chosen by program committee on basis of artistic and technical merits. Ron Henderson, fest director, emphasized that 30% of films selected were independent productions. Categories include: contemporary cinema (new int'l features), documentary, New American Cinema (primarily independent narrative

works), children's, nocturne (midnight sleazy/horror flicks). 1983's fest opened with a premier of Francis Ford Coppola's *Rumble Fish* & closed with Jonathan Kaplan's *Heart Like a Wheel*. Entries invited in 16 & 35mm; Contact: Ron Henderson, 609 E. Speer Boulevard, PO Box 17508, Denver CO 80217; (303) 744-1031.

● **VIDEO FREE HAWAII**, July 13. 9th event seeks mainland indie works, especially experimental art.



An ironic view of the "beautiful people" is offered in *Where Did You Get That Woman?*, a winner at Bilbao.

Funded by Hawaii arts foundation. will pay reasonable rental fee. Enter as soon as possible. Contact: Kerry Taggart, Video Free Hawaii, 2106 Oahu Ave., Honolulu HI 96822; (808) 955-1918.

● **VIDEO SHORTS IV**, October 6-7. Entries up to 5 minutes in length invited to compete for 10 \$100 prizes. Winners selected by an average of public score sheet ratings & guest critic/video artist Vibeke Sorensen. Composite monitor screenings of winners in downtown Seattle; works also distributed to media centers. 122 shorts were entered in 1983, according to fest coordinator Parker Lindner. Winners included Max Almy's *Leaving the 20th Century* & Maxi Cohen's *Cape May*. Deadline: Sept. 22. Entry fee of \$10 includes return postage. Contact: Parker Lindner, PO Box 20069, Broadway Station, Seattle WA 98102; (206) 322-9010.

## Foreign

● **ANZAAS INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC FILM EXHIBITION**, December, encourages production & exhibition of scientific films in Australia, New Zealand & New Guinea. Entries should pose problem, demonstrate logical enquiry & resolution. Selected films will tour cities as exhibition from Feb. to Nov. 1985. Orbit award for best entry. 16mm prints accepted in 3 categories: research, teaching, general scientific. No fee; entrant pays postage. Deadline: Sept. 30. Contact: P. Lever-Naylor, ANZAAS, 10 Martin Pl., 504 Challis House, Box 873 GPO, Sydney, New South Wales 2000, Australia; (02) 231-4827.

● **BANFF FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAIN FILMS**, November. 9th event accepts 16 & 35mm entries by Sept. 30. National panel awards Grand Prize, best of category for mountaineering, mtn. sports, environment, commercial, historical, safety. Certificate of participation for all entries. Contact: Banff Festival of Mountain Films, Banff Centre, PO Box 1020, Banff, Alberta TOL OCO Canada; (403) 762-630.

● **BILBAO INT'L FESTIVAL OF DOCUMENTARY & SHORT FILMS**, November, held annually in this Basque coastal city. Although Americans have done well here, there have been legitimate complaints about the festival's operation since 1980. Loretta Smith's documentary *Where Did You Get That Woman* was awarded a gold Mikeldi in 1983. She has yet to receive the promised \$1,000 prize money or her print. US indies won grand prizes in 1981 & 1980 (Larry Adelman for *Controlling Interest: The World of the Multinational Corporation*; Glenn Silber & Tete Vasconcellos for *El Salvador: Another Vietnam*). They both reported waiting a year for their films, trophies & money, so if you do not have print to spare for that length of time, you may not wish to enter. Prints accepted in 16 or 35mm in fiction, animation & documentary categories. Docs of any length; shorts under 60 mins. No entry fee; entry pays postage. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Manuel Pagola, Certamen Int'l de Cine Documental y Cortometraje, Aizpiri Colon de Larreategui 37-4, Bilbao, Spain; 424-86-98/416-54-29.

● **BRUSSELS INT'L GAY & LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL**, October 19-21. First fest of its kind in Europe, to be held in this city's Centre des Riches Claires. Sponsored by gay media organization Antenne Rose (Pink Antenna), with help from Int'l S-8 Film Federation. Fest seeks creative works showing gay life in a true & human way. 6 awards for int'l jury's choice of best productions. Winners will be screened at San Francisco's 9th Int'l G&L Fest in 1985 Contact: Secretariat du Festival, B.P. 888, 1000 Bruxelles, Belgium; 649-33-40.

● **CAIRO INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, November. Despite support from Ministry of Culture, National Film Centre & local gov't authorities, fest can't shake disorganized reputation resulting from constantly tense Middle East situation. Arab countries participated in last year's 6th event for first time since Camp David accords. Americans have yet to be represented, although fest director Ahmed Al-Hadary responded enthusiastically to our query about 1984. Feature-length & shorts under 30 min. accepted in 35mm. Films selected by committee; each receives certificate of participation. Deadline: Sept. 5. No fee; entrant pays postage. Contact: Ahmed El-Hadary, Cairo Int'l Film Festival, 9 Oraby St., PO Box 2060, Cairo, Egypt; 92041 Shera Un.

● **CINANIMA INT'L ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL**, November. Charming town on Portugal's northern seacoast hosts 8th event. First animation with experimental category (begun 1982), perfect for US indies, who are welcome here. (Last year's grand prize went to Will Vinton's short, *The Great Cognito*.) Fest is small compared to Ottawa or Zagreb, & low-budget, but attracts new works from some of the world's best animators. Charles Samu, Cinanima's first American judge (& Zagreb's US rep since '72) reported over 100 entries from more than 15 countries. He described the fest as "low key, very serious about animation, a growing, respected event." Samu's 5 fellow judges included Jacques Colombard, Hungary's Marcel Yonk, & Portuguese TV exec Vaso Granja. Perhaps as a result of Granja's participation, some works were picked up for TV. 1983's fest featured 3 programs of American animation—general (works of the past decade), women, experimental. Competition categories include feature film, publicity, informative, student, youth, didactic, children. No entry fee; entrant pays postage. Deadline: Sept. Contact: Cinanima Organizer Committee, Apartado 43, 4501 Espinho Codex, Portugal; (02) 92-16-21.



● **COMPETITION FOR SHORT FILMS ON JAPAN**, November, invites short cultural, scientific, industrial & documentary films on Japan. Prizewinning films shown publicly in Tokyo and other Japanese cities. 60 min. max.; 16 & 35mm. No fee. Deadline early Sept. Contact: Toyuharu Kuroda, Assoc. for the Diffusion of Japanese Films Abroad (UniJapan Film), 9-13 Ginza 5, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, 104 Japan; (03) 572-5106.

● **HOF—INTERNATIONAL HOFER FILM DAYS**, October, showcases new American & European independent films. Features in 35 & 16mm invited; filmmakers offered hospitality. Warm reception and enthusiastic crowds reported, but it should be noted that participation in Hof will disqualify your film from Berlin in Feb. Enter by September. Contact: Heinz Badewitz, Hof Cine Center E.V., PO Box 1146, D8760, Hof, West Germany (FRG) (89) 19.74.22.

● **HONG KONG INT'L SHORT FILM EXHIBITION**, November. Sponsored by Canon, Kodak & Minolta, definitely interested in American indies. Only local entries compete for prizes, but certificates of participation are awarded to int'l films selected for screening. Event does not function as a market, but mass media publicity attracts public & critics. 35mm, 16mm & S-8, none over 30 mins. No entry fee; fest pays return air post. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Iris Chan, Hong Kong Independent Short Film Exhibition, c/o Phoenix Cine Club, GPO Box 7449, Hong Kong.

● **INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT & ALPINE FILMS (LES DIABLERETS)**, September-October, for adventurers. Located 4,000 feet above sea level, it is open to films on themes of mountaineering & skiing & related issues like mountain legends, folklore & protection of mountain environment. 30 films shown last year from 10 countries; no US entries. The fest is run on a miniscule budget, so no travel or accommodations are provided. This fest is unlike any other—it's a mountain experience first and foremost. The glacier Les Diablerets, is a real challenge at 10,000 feet; hikes start at 8 am. Jury is composed of mountaineering specialists, from climbers to like-minded TV producers. Prizes: 5 Golden Devils & Swiss Alpine Club of approx. \$1,000; Cinegram Lab offers prize of up to \$1,000 worth of services. Local papers cover the event daily & several TV stations including French Antenne 2, are present to buy & sell. If your dream is to film an expedition to Kangchenjunga, you could meet your match at Les Diablerets. Enter by Aug. 15, with a transcript in French or English. Entry fee: \$25; entrant pays all postage. Contact: Patrick Messeiller, Administrative Director, Case Postale CH 1865, Les Diablerets, Switzerland; (025) 53.13.58; telex: CH-456175. (—JL)

● **LEIPZIG INT'L DOCUMENTARY & SHORT FILM FESTIVAL**, November, welcomes progressive documentaries to their premiere Eastern bloc meeting place. Selections were handled last year by Jonathan Miller at Icarus Films; plans for '84 are not yet in place but a similar arrangement is anticipated. For more info, send SASE to J. Miller, Icarus Films, 200 Park Ave. So., #1319, NY NY 10003. A detailed report on the 1983 Festival will appear in the Sept. issue of *The Independent*.

● **MANNHEIM INT'L YOUTH FILM CONTEST**, October, occurs annually during the Mannheim International Film Week. Competitive fest presents films specifically for & about children. Special attention given to works dealing with youth problems of a social or political nature. Categories include animation, doc-

umentary, experimental, youth problems, "agitations" & other. Certificates awarded all films shown. Entries in 35 & 16mm. No entry fee. Deadline: Sept. Contact: Reiner Keller, Organizer, Stadt Mannheim, Rathaus E-5, D-6800 Mannheim 1, West Germany; 0241-82920.

● **MEDIKINALE MARBURG INT'L COMPETITION FOR MEDICAL FILMS**, September, accepts

include 5 for creativity (according to production's budget!), 4 from the press, & best of country, choreography & other categories. Awards ceremony to be televised live from l'Hotel Byblos on French television. We know indies are producing excellent work despite low budgets—here's the chance to prove it, if you can afford the entry fee of approx. \$289. (1,950 francs + value-added tax.) Deadline: mid-September. Contact: John E. Nathan, North American Representative, 509

Courtesy Filmmaker



Last year's Cinanima Animation grand prize went to Will Vinton's short, *The Great Gognito*.

recent documentaries on medicine, medical research, teaching & physician & public health info. Wide variety of awards. Held in Marburg's City Hall, fest usually receives approx. 130 entries from 20 countries. Jury includes a physician, specialist, medical journalist, film director & laypeople. German translation required. 16mm, S-8, video. Entry fee: approx. \$75. Fest pays return postage. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: German Green Cross, Dr. Herbert Schreiner, Schuhmarkt 4, D-3550 Marburg-Lahn, West Germany; 6421-24044.

● **PARIS INT'L SCI-FI & FANTASY FILM FEST**, November, accepts recent horror, fantasy & sci-fi films previously unreleased in France. Fest is well-attended by public (audiences of 3,000 for every presentation), critics & distributors; a screening here makes a film's French promotion. Last year's Golden Unicorn went to British sci-fi feature, *Xtro*, directed by H.B. Davenport. US filmmakers did well also: Michael Dugan's *Mausoleum* won the Special Jury Prize & best actress citation for Bobbie Bresee. Don Hopper was voted best actor for Aaron Lipstadt's *Android*. Features must be in 35mm, but video is OK for selection purposes. Shorts under 15 mins. accepted in 16mm. entrant pays postage; no entry fee. Deadline: September 1. Contact: Alain Schlockoff, Director, Paris Int'l Science Fiction & Fantasy Film Festival, Association Ecran Fantastique, 9 Rue du Midi, 92200 Neuilly, France; 624-04-71/745-62-31.

● **SAINT TROPEZ INT'L VIDEO CLIP FESTIVAL**, October 8-11. One of the world's chicest bay resorts introduces a music video festival. well-financed first event will take place during the glorious Indian summer there. Event should receive wide media coverage & organizers are striving to make it a tremendous market. North American rep John Nathan said that 1,500 world distributors, publishers, TV programmers were registered at the time of this writing. 25-member celebrity jury (critics, musicians, composers, etc.) will choose 300-400 clips for presentation. Variety of prizes

Madison Ave., Suite 1810, NY NY 10022; (212) 223-0044.

● **SALERNO INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, October 15-21, established in 1946. Committee conducts preliminary judging. Participants receive certificates, prizes for best of category in feature, short, science, medical/surgical, women, amateur/independent, educational, animated & experimental in 16mm, 8 mm & S-8. 35mm entries accepted for first feature by new director, documentary & music films. Videocassettes in any category. Fees from 6,000 to 50,000 lira. Deadline: Sept. 10. Contact: Dott. Ignazio Rossi, Corso Vittorio Emanuele 140, Casella Postale 137, 84100 Salerno, Italy; 089-231953.

● **VIDEO CULTURE CANADA**, October 29-November 4. Protested even before the first event of last year, this heavily funded, media-hyped "Olympics of video" received harsh criticism by Jane Northey in our Jan/Feb issue. Despite extensive funding, filmmakers paid a \$25 entry fee & there were several entry conditions: VCC acquired total broadcast exhibition rights, artists waived their right to collect exhibition fees, & all works were subject to approval by the Ontario Board of Censors. A recent conversation with Cynthia Cooper, secretary of fest administrators who were unavailable for comment, confirmed that VCC will continue these practices. The event was staged in Toronto's posh Harborfront area, but this glamorous locale could not compensate for the exploitative attitude towards independents. There will be 9 categories this year, meaning only 9 prizes. Cheap shot 1984: the art video will have 4 sub-divisions, & those artists not willing to pay \$25 can enter their tape here for free. Winners will probably share a quartered prize, although Sony, the fest's main sponsor, may provide 4 \$1,000 cash & equip. prizes. Proceed with caution. Deadline: August 15. Contact: Cynthia Cooper, 94 Scarsdale Rd., Don Mills, Ontario M3B3R7; (416) 446-6996. ■



## NOTICES

**Notices** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others included as space permits. Send Notices to **The Independent**, c/o FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012. For further info, call (212) 473-3400. Deadline: 8th of preceding month (e.g. July 8th for September issue). Edited by Mary Guzzy.

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● **FOR RENT:** Complete broadcast-quality production pkg. Includes Ikegami HL-83, ¾" JVC 4700U, color Videotek monitor, wave-form, mikes, lights & tripod. Production personnel also available. Competitive rates. Contact: Everglade Prods., (212) 925-1247, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Ikegami HL-79A, BVU 110, lights, mikes, insurance. \$450/day. Radio mikes, car, sunglasses, crew additional as required. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Tektronix waveform monitor, \$650. Panasonic NV-9300A. \$900. JVC 4400 portable ¾". \$1200. Frezzolini battery belts, 6AH. \$125. Sharp 13" monitor receiver, \$300. JVC KY 2000. \$2400. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony 366 reel-to-reel 7" tape deck. Quarterback stereo, 3 heads, new belts, rollers, playback head, edit feature. Nagra compatible. Best offer. Call (212) 548-2875 evenings 6-10pm, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** New Sony M-3 camera w/3 tubes; BVU 110 or 4800 deck; batteries, monitor, tripod, mikes & Lowell lighting. Very portable. Reasonable rates for equipment & cameraperson; crew as needed. Contact: Alan, (212) 222-3321; Caryn, (212) 222-6748, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Sunny attractive offices, furnished or unfurnished w/private entrances. Near west Village. 1, 2, & 3 room suites. Additional conference/screening room & office equipment available to share. Very high floor, excellent panoramic views, small terraces, air conditioning. 24 hr. building, excellent security. Sublet. Reasonable. Call: (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** State-of-the-art 16mm film equipment at incredibly low rates. Call: (212) 222-6699, NY.

● **WANTED:** Used director's finder. Contact Ken Meyer, (212) 861-9850, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Nagra III w/crystal sync, case, AC adaptor. Adapted for 7½" reels; excellent condition. Reservation & deposit required. Contact: Theresa Weedy, (212) 447-3280, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Angenieux 9.5-57mm w/finder & C-cup adaptor. Mint. \$800. Call: David, (901) 458-7349/454-2569, TN.

● **PRODUCTION FORMS:** For short films & low-budget features. Set of 40 masters, \$12.50. Send long SASE for sample. Contact: Don Kirk Enterprises, Dept. 209, Rt. 9. Box 127, Canyon Lake TX 78130.

● **FOR SALE:** 1 16/8mm Maier Hancock hot splicer. Excellent condition. \$350. Call: (212) 738-9126, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Kalart Victor 70-15 16mm projector. Very reliable; good condition. \$275. Call: Adam Zucker, (212) 966-0624, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Broadcast ENG gear w/Ikegami HL83, Sony BVU 110 w/time code, lights, mikes, Sachtler tripod, international crew for local rates. Call: Lisa, Metro Video, (212) 267-8221/608-6005, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** French Eclair ACL w/Angenieux 12-120mm zoom, 2 200' mags, quick-charger, 3 batteries, pistol grip, travelling case & accessories. 1 owner, only 20,000 shot, perfect condition. \$5500; \$4,500 w/o lens. Contact: Dennis, (802) 257-5683, VT.

● **FOR SALE:** Thomson/Sony MC 501 camera, Fujinon 14x9 lens w/extender, battery/ENG package. One owner, very good condition. \$10,000 or best offer. Call: Mike, (202) 462-5310, DC.

● **FOR SALE:** Photosonics Actionmaster 500. Mint condition. Call: (212) 532-3066, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 100,000' 16mm fill leader; 5 splices/1000 ft. reel. \$4/reel. 100,000' 35mm fill leader; 5 splices/100 ft. reel. \$6/reel. 50,000' 35mm mag stock degaused; 5 splices/1000 ft. reel. \$10/reel. Contact: David Greaves, (212) 206-1213, NY.

### Conferences • Seminars

● **SECOND ANNUAL VIDEO/MUSIC SEMINAR:** Sponsored by RockAmerica at Waldorf-Astoria ballroom, Fri. Aug. 10, 1984. Day-long event will explore future directions of video/music through panel discussions, special presentations & exhibition of state-of-the-art technology. Topics include Cable & Broadcast TV, Directors & Producers, Clubs: Audio & Video, Long Form Video/Music, Careers in Video/Music & much more. Participants include key representatives from record cos., video production cos., major & independent film studios & others from around the world. Contact: Joanna Molloy, (212) 475-5791/674-1890, NY.

● **1984 NEBRASKA VIDEODISC SYMPOSIUM** at Nebraska Center for Continuing Education & Cornhusker Center in Lincoln NE, Aug. 27-30. Theme of conference is "Videodisc—The Industry Comes of

Age" & will explore expanding interactive videodisc industry. Features demonstrations of on-line applications in education, industry, recreation & optical data storage tech. Nebraska ETV Videodisc Design & Production Center is multi-year CPB-funded program producing original interactive videodiscs. Contact: Ron Nugent, Dir., Nebraska Videodisc Group, (402) 472-3611, NE.

● **INTRODUCTION TO ARTS MANAGEMENT**, sponsored by Arts Extension Service, Amherst MA will be held July 11-13 at University of MA/Amherst. Explore how to increase audiences, raise more money from donors, set & achieve organizational goals, improve public relations & publicity, recruit & work effectively w/volunteers & plan & present successful arts events. Brochure available. Contact: AES, Div. Continuing Education, University of MA, Amherst MA 01003, (413) 545-2360.

● **UNION FOR DEMOCRATIC COMMUNICATIONS:** 2nd conference & general meeting to be held Oct. 19-21, 1984. Conference theme is "Communications & Empowerment" & activities will include panels, workshops, discussions delivery of papers, performances & audio/video/film presentations. Contact: Anna L. Zornosa, UDC Conference Planning Committee, 3116½ B 16 St. NW, Washington DC 20010.

● **NORTH AMERICAN TELEVISION INSTITUTE:** Intensive full-day seminars designed to strengthen video professionals' skills in areas of editing, directing, scripting, lighting, sound & audio field production/post-production, computer animation, technical troubleshooting, management & video production techniques. July 10-13 at 57 Park Plaza Hotel, Boston; Aug. 14-17 at Amfac Hotel, Dallas/Ft. Worth Airport; Oct. 1-5 at Sheraton City Squire, NYC. Contact: Sheila Alper, Knowledge Industry Publications, (914) 328-9157, NY.

● **VIDEO, FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS:** Series of 1-wk. intensive workshops at Bennington College in video production, filmmaking, slide/tape production & still photography. George Stoney, Richard Kaplan, Sumner Glimcher & Eugene Richards. 2 sessions per subject beginning Aug. 5 & Aug. 12. Free brochure available. Contact: Doug Krause, VF&P Workshops, Bennington College, Bennington VT 05201, (802) 442-5401.

● **SUMMER WORKSHOPS AT YOUNG FILMMAKERS/VIDEO ARTS:** Introductory & specialized classes in film/video production. Craft of 16mm Editing, 124-hr. sessions, 9am-1pm, begins July 10. Portable Video Production Basics, 9 4-hr. sessions, 6-10pm, begins July 11. 16mm Camera: A Practical Intro., 10am-6pm, July 14-15. Lighting for Film & Video, 10am-6pm, July 21-22. ¾" Videocassette Editing (w/Time Code), 11am-5pm, July 21-22 & July 28 or 29. Free brochure available. Contact: YF/VA, 4 Rivington St., NY NY 10002, (212) 673-9361.

### Editing Facilities

● **THE EDITING POST** offers ¾" editing at \$50/hr. w/editor. System includes JVC CR-8250 recorder w/vertical interval head switching & balanced audio inputs—broadcast standards, Chyron VP-1 graphics, time-base correction and full time code capability, including window dubs. Discounts for longer projects. Convenient midtown NY location; 24 hr., 7 day access. Book time M-F, 10 am-6 pm. Contact: Gerry Pallor, (212) 757-4220, NY.

● **QUIET EDITING ROOM IN SOHO:** Rough cuts, cataloguing, time code edit lists, clip reels, supervised



dubs, viewing. \$15/hr. w/experienced editor; 4 hr. minimum. Do it yourself, \$50/6 hrs.; 10 am-4 pm or 4 pm-10 pm. Call: (212) 925-6059, NY.

● **UPPER WEST SIDE STEENBECK RENTAL:** 8-plate or 6-plate; reasonable rates. Call: (212) 874-7444, NY.

● **EDITOR OF ACADEMY AWARD**-nominated documentary now cuts ¾" video off-line. JVC decks w/FM dub, Cezar 1VC microprocessor controller, special effects keyer & colorizer, fade to black, waveform & pulse cross monitor, b&w graphics camera w/animation stand & titling system, mikes, turntable, audio cassette, VHS time code burn in. \$25/hr. for projects under \$3500. Contact: Bruce Ettinger, (212) 226-8489, NY.

● **SELF-SERVICE EDITING:** ¾" JVC Tape-handlers, RM-88U editor, free instruction. \$20/hr. Transfers, dubs, etc. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **MOVIOLA M-77s FOR RENT:** \$500/mo. in your workspace. 15% discount to AIVF members. Contact: Philmaster Productions, (212) 873-4470, NY.

● **LARGE EDIT ROOM** w/6-plate Steenbeck. Windows, carpet, phone, access top video deck, copy machine, etc. Contact: Bob McBride, Earthrise, 330 West 42 St., NY NY 10036, (212) 594-6967.

● **EDITING ROOM:** Fully equipped w/6-plate flat-bed Moviola, bins, synchronizer, viewer & splicer. Near Greenwich Village west. High floor, panoramic view, small terrace. Conference/screening room to share. Also available for sublet office & office equipment. 24 hr. building, excellent security, reasonable. Call: (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **VIDEO EDITING & TIME CODING:** ¾" hi-speed video editing on new JVC 8250 w/convergence control. \$20/\$30 per hour. Low rates for time coding & time code editing. Call: Inpoint Production, (212) 679-3172, NY.

● **TWO COMPLETE EDITING ROOMS** in Chelsea: (a) 24-hr. access: Moviola flatbed w/torque motor box; complete 16mm edit equipment; complete kitchen & bathroom; minimal office facilities; telephone; air conditioning. (b) 10am-6pm access; Steenbeck; complete 16mm edit equipment; ltd. kitchen, bath facilities; specialized edit equipment available at extra cost. Contact: David Loucka, Lance Bird, (212) 584-7530, NY.

● **EDITING & POST-PRODUCTION FACILITIES AVAILABLE:** Short-term rentals only. 9am-5pm business days, KEM 8-plate, 16/35mm, ¾" editing, sound transfer, narration recording, extensive sound effects library, interlock screening. Contact: Cinetudes Film Productions, 295 West 4 St., NY NY 10014; (212) 966-4600.

● **BRODSKY & TREADWAY S-8 & 8MM FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER MASTERS:** Scene-by-scene density & total color correction, variable speed & freeze frame, sound from any source. Artists & broadcasters like our work. By appointment only. Call (617) 666-3372, MA.

● **STEENBECKS FOR RENT:** Moderately priced by the month. Delivered to your workspace. Prompt repairs included. Call: Paul, (212) 316-2913, NY.

● **LARGE COMFORTABLE EDITING ROOM** w/KEM 8-plate Universal editing table, 16mm &

35mm, rewinds, bins, splicers, synchronizers, etc., private phone; additional office space available. Mid-town location. Call: Errol Morris Films, 1697 Broadway, NY NY 10019, (212) 757-7478/582-4045.

● **REGULAR & S-8 FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER:** Professional quality, industrial or broadcast; much better than you've seen before. Contact: Landy, 400 East 83 St. #4A, NY NY 10028; (212) 734-1402.

● **SONY BVU ¾" EDITING:** \$25/hr. w/editor. (212) 242-2320, NY.

● **RAINDANCE EDITING:** ¾" to ¾" Panasonic system w/character generator & audio mixer. Private, comfortable editing room. \$20/hr. w/o editor; \$25/hr. w/editor. Call: (212) 807-9566, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Steenbeck Editing Room, fully equipped including telephone. Special rates for independents. Contact: Bob Mack Productions, (212) 736-3074/757-9398, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Complete 16mm editing room, small but comfortable; available on monthly basis only. \$400/mo.; telephone additional. Contact: Gero Organization, 1140 Broadway, Ste. 605, NY NY 10001, (212) 889-6165.

● **OFFICE/EDITING ROOM:** 2 spacious furnished rooms available for 9 mos. or longer. Excellent Greenwich Village location, 24 hr. access, kitchen, bathroom. Reasonable. Call: (212) 620-9157/265-2140, NY.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

● **FOX/LORBER ASSOCIATES**, specialists in TV marketing & distribution, expanding feature film

library for representation. Interested in full-length English language films w/primarily narrative structure for sale to pay TV/cable, broadcast & home video, both domestic & foreign. Minimum length: 60 min.; no subtitles. Contact: Ericka Markman, Fox/Lorber Assocs., 79 Madison Ave., #601, NY NY 10016; (212) 686-6777.

● **PELICAN FILMS** seeks films/tapes for distribution to holistic health movement. We offer alternatives to traditional non-theatrical distribution. Contact: Arthur Hoyle, 3010 Santa Monica Blvd. #440, Santa Monica, CA 90404; (213) 399-3753.

● **CHANNEL 25:** Cable public access station actively seeks independent work for airing Thursdays & Fridays, noon-10 pm. Submit tape for preview/application form. ½" VHS or ¾" only. 28 & 58 min. preferred but all lengths considered. Selected works are scheduled immediately. Contact: Julio Ramirez, Ch-25, 1855 Folsom St., San Francisco CA 94103, (415) 863-7885.

● **SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY TV** seeks programs to rent on variety of general interest topics. Send listing of available programming in series & single program format. Contact: SCT, Box 474, Somerville MA 02143.

● **MARIN COMMUNITY VIDEO**, non-profit public access cable station, seeks works for cablecast. Potential audience is 40,000. Work is aired in evening slots for maximum outreach. No monetary compensation. Contact: Elaine Trotter, Marin Access 31, c/o Marin Community Video, 61 Tamal Vista Blvd., Corte Madera CA 94925, (415) 499-8566.

● **PROMOTE VIDEO WORKS IN BELGIUM & EUROPE:** All copyright paid to producer. Contact:

(continued on page 37)



## WEYNAND ASSOCIATES

—The Post Production Training People—

is pleased to announce the following hands-on, professional training courses in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, & Washington D.C., for January - May, 1984.

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40-hours, in-depth, hands-on course taught on weekends & weeknights using the CMX 340x.

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In keeping with the summer weather, it's been a hot period for AIVF producers. Although the scramble for funds and distribution outlets goes on and on, it's encouraging to hear from so many film and videomakers who are getting the job done. Many of the works mentioned this month have taken years to complete; the results should give a boost to all independents still struggling with that first proposal or screenplay.

### FLOCKS OF DOCS

Breaking new ground in using film as a grassroots organizing tool is California Newsreel's documentary *The Business of America...*, which traces the roots of America's industrial decline to the inability of the profit system to provide for long-term economic growth. The film directly challenges one of the most basic assumptions of the American economic system: that private corporations should, or must, determine national economic opportunity.

*The Business of America...* examines, through the eyes of a working class couple in the steel industry-dominated region of western Pennsylvania, the corporate and political strategies of big business which engineered the election of Ronald Reagan, and shows the emerging political awareness of many now-unemployed workers as they explore ways to effect their communities' renewal. The film runs 45 minutes, with an additional 13-minute epilogue created for a PBS broadcast this past May.

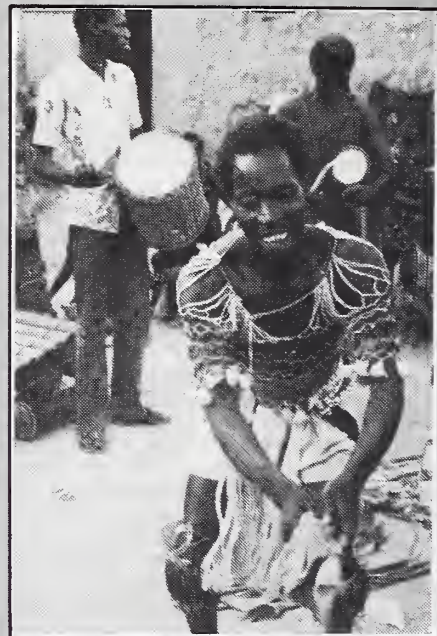
California Newsreel producer Larry Adelman, who made the film with Lawrence Daressa and Bruce Schmeichen, said it took two years to complete the project on an estimated budget of \$145,000 provided by CPB, small foundations and private individuals (including the producers themselves). The film has already won an

American Film Festival Blue Ribbon and a Golden Cine at the Athens Film Festival. With hundreds of prints in distribution, *The Business of America...* is being shown in union halls, church and school auditoriums and on college campuses as areas hard-hit by the decline of US industry struggle for economic self-reliance.

### PEACE AND...

Robbie Leppzer and Lisa Berger of Turning Tide Productions are planning a fall distribution blitz aimed at schools, peace and Central America solidarity groups for *Harvest of Peace*, a 30-minute documentary on the American work brigades in Nicaragua. In February of this year, Leppzer and Berger accompanied 150 Americans to a remote village on the gulf of Fionseca in northern Nicaragua near the borders of Honduras and El Salvador. These Americans were answering the call of the National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People to work in the cotton and coffee fields and demonstrate that "Marines aren't the only Americans who want to go to Nicaragua." The campesinos report that the American presence in this context has greatly reduced the contra attacks on the region.

During the two weeks that Leppzer and Berger were filming, contras staged an attack (later reported by the *New York Times* to have been a CIA-directed operation) near the village. Leppzer and Berger filmed American and Nicaraguan reactions to the violence. Although most Americans returned from Nicaragua excited by "the possibility for change in a very open society," Leppzer said that the lights of American warships dotting the night horizon in the Gulf of Fionseca were a reminder of the increasing threat of a full-scale American military invasion in Central America.



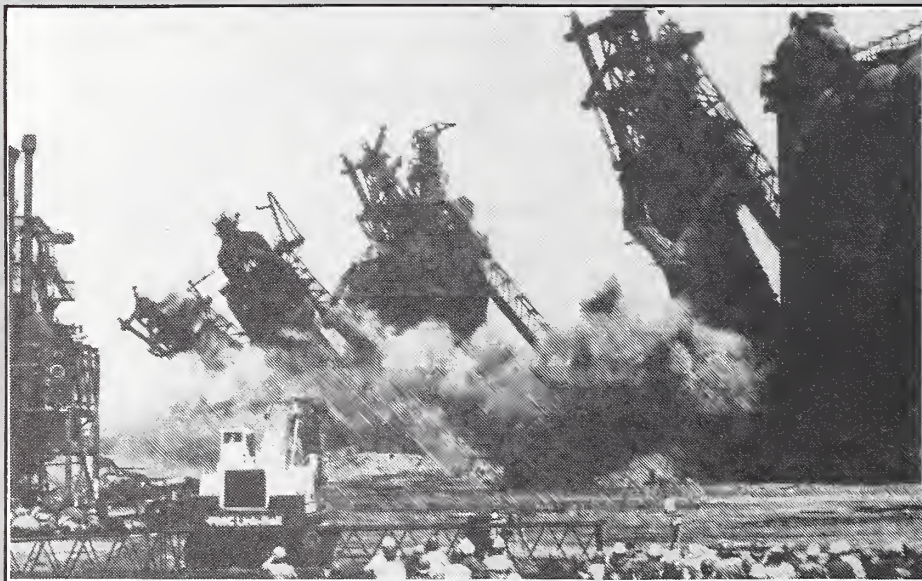
*Harvest of Peace* was filmed with a Nizo 6080 S-8 camera and a Sony TCD5M cassette tape recorder, and will be transferred to videocassette. Excerpts from the 30 hours of audio recorded by Berger will be heard on the National Public Radio programs *All Things Considered* and *Horizons*. Berger also recorded the voices of Nicaraguan children singing traditional songs, and Leppzer introduced them to the workings of the camera. "It endeared us to the village immediately," Leppzer said. "The media always seems to be taking and taking. This was something we could give back to them."

### ...GUNS

Producer Neal Marshad of New York has completed a unique film project in cooperation with the National Alliance Against Violence and ad agency Backer & Spielvogel. *Handguns Aren't the Answer* will be used by police departments in New York City, Chicago, Minneapolis and Oakland to educate community groups about the dangers of handguns and alternatives to guns for self-protection. Marshad is also negotiating with CBS for a future network broadcast of the film.

*Handguns Aren't the Answer* juxtaposes four scenes depicting case histories of handgun homicides with narrator Michael Douglas delivering the grim statistics on handgun ownership and the consequences of their untrained use. Marshad and writer Jeff Soref were assisted by the Crime Prevention Section of the NYC Police Department in constructing scenes showing recommended alternative methods.

From African Family Films in Venice, California, director Jim Rosellini reports completion of cinematography on three 16mm color documentaries portraying different aspects of life and culture in Africa.



California Newsreel's *The Business of America...* examines America's industrial decline.



Courtesy Filmmaker



Above, scenes from two of Rosellini's recently-completed documentaries, *A Family for All Seasons* and *Great Great Grandfather's Music*.

*Great Great Grandfather's Music* is a 60-minute portrait of three generations of *griots*—musicians and carriers of African history. Made over a period of 10 years, the film documents the passing of music, dance and song from elders to children. *Zam Zam* depicts the life of the most renowned dancer of the Mossi Empire at home with his family and in performance at traditional harvest and funeral celebrations. *Zam Zam* and fellow dancers participate in all-night dances, and *Zam Zam* performs with live scorpions to demonstrate the power of *tiim* medicine. *A Family for All Seasons* (90 minutes) follows a rural West African family in their year-round struggle to live off the land through a cycle of bumper crops and devastating droughts. The African agricultural cycle is extensively documented as well as the role music, dance and oral traditions play in West African culture. All three documentaries have soundtracks in African languages of the region with subtitles available in English, Spanish and French.

Rosellini, who first went to Africa as a Peace Corps volunteer, has spent 15 years making films about African culture. His productions are financed by loans from family and friends, distribution of earlier films and lecture series he gives in Europe, Africa and the US. Rosellini founded the Upper Volta Sound Archives for the preservation of traditional African music, and shares the profits from film distribution with the subjects of his documentaries. Many of these same people have begun making their own documentaries in S-8 and 1/2" video, thus contributing to a

fledgling cinema movement centered in the city of Ougadougou, Upper Volta.

In other documentary news, *Hobie's Heroes*, Steven Montgomery's film about the inspirational Olympic diving coach Hobie Billingsley, will be aired this fall as part of the national PBS series, *FOCUS Film Festival*. The film is 29 minutes long and has received numerous awards in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington DC and Nashville... On July 18, PBS will nationally air Jan Krawitz and Thomas Ott's documentary *Little People* in a 58-minute version. The film, which premiered at the 1982 New York Film Festival, explores the special problems and perspectives of Americans born with the condition known as dwarfism... Producer Rich Schmiechen expects to complete his new film *Out of Order: The Times of Harvey Milk* by the end of July. The 90-minute documentary, directed by Robert Epstein, has been six years in the making and is slated for an early 1985 PBS broadcast. In the meanwhile, the filmmakers have been vigorously fundraising for completion monies through work-in-progress screenings in New York and California.

#### CARTOON ALLEY

Two new interesting projects in the animated film genre: *The Tower* is a first collaboration between veteran filmmaker Emily Hubley and newcomer Georgia Hubley. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts with a musical score by Don Christensen, *The Tower* concerns a power struggle between a subject and a tower which victimizes and controls those who enter its domain. The film is ten-and-a-half minutes short.

And after nine years of experimentation with all forms of animation from pixillation to cell to computer animation, dynamic duo Steve Segal and Phil Trumbo of Rocket Films in Virginia have decided to let the general

public in on *Futuropolis*, a 40-minute color animated featurette which parodies classic science fiction. Drawing on the influence of such animators as Max Fleischer and Walt Disney as well as the schtick and fantasy of the Marx Brothers, Flash Gordon and *The Wizard of Oz*, *Futuropolis* is set in outer space sometime in the future. Actors and animated characters move the action forward as four space rangers scour the cosmos in an effort to disarm the evil scientist Egghead before he gains control of the universe with his deadly mutation ray. The film had its theatrical premiere on April 12 at the Biograph Theatre in Richmond, VA and should soon be familiar on the US festival circuit. Trumbo and Segal are also negotiating for national theatrical release.

#### FEATURES FLOURISH

Filmgoers still toughing it out in the New York August heat will want to be sure to see indie Miguel Chacour's first film in 10 years, which will be screened at the Public Theatre's Latin American Festival (Aug. 10-20). *The Assassination of a Long-Distance Runner* is the dramatization of a true story of one of Argentina's many "disappeared" citizens who vanished under the military dictatorship between 1976-83. In this case the man, a long-distance runner, was arrested as he returned to Buenos Aires from an international footrace. The film contains scenes of the last race the athlete ran and the race he intended to run before he disappeared.

Chacour, who knew the victim personally, has financed the 70-minute black-and-white and color work with loans and savings. He worked with a group of amateur and semi-professional actors and had "terrific cooperation" from the people of Brazil, Uruguay and Spain, where major filming took place. After screening at the Latin American Festival, Chacour plans to make a 35mm blow-up of *Assassination of a Long-Distance Runner* for European distribution.

Prince of the low-budget feature Eric Mitchell (*Underground, U.S.A.*) is currently putting the finishing audio touches on a New York story tentatively titled *The Way It Is*. The action entwines the underworld of Cocteau's *Orpheus* and the real-life Hades of New York City when a group of actors rehearsing the play in the East Village all become suspects in the murder of the actress playing Eurydice.

Associate producer Randal Goya is building a complete five-layer soundtrack for the 16mm Plus-X film, which was shot entirely without sound for the astonishing sum of \$500. Goya estimates the final budget will be slightly higher—around \$45,000 after post-production—and reports that Mitchell has achieved this feat with such creative production techniques as hauling his equipment from location to location in a cart. A limited partnership for the project has now been formed, which will hopefully alleviate some of the footwork.



Banking on the future: Steve Segal and Phil Trumbo's animated *Futuropolis*.



(continued from page 33)

Vincent Leynen, Ave. de Tervueren, 309, Bte 2, 1150 Brussels, Belgium.

● **FILMMAKERS/VIDEO ARTISTS** working w/comedy & interested in having works distributed to nightclubs, bars & restaurants. Contact: Zoom Video, (212) 737-5606, NY.

## Freelancers

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, French, German & Russian—English OK, too—available for documentary. CP GSMO, lights, sound, editing facilities. Based in Santa Fe, specializing in Hispanic subjects in US & Latin America. Contact: Pachon Lane, PO Box 266, Cerrillos, NM 87010, (505) 982-6800.

● **SCRIPT SUPERVISOR** available to work on independent features & shorts. Contact: Mindy Rodman, (212) 636-1426, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/15 yrs. experience in 35mm & 16mm interested in independent fiction films. Fluent in French. Contact: Babette Mangolte, (212) 925-6329, NY.

● **ANIMATION/ARTIST:** 16mm & 35mm full production animation. Titles, logos, cell animation, rotoscoping, motion graphics, stop motion & claymation. ¼" video sample available. Contact: Robert Lyons, (212) 777-4275, NY.

● **COMPOSER**, recently arrived NY, seeks scoring projects. Credits include *Madam Sin*, *Secrets*, *Intimate Reflections*. Audio & video demo tapes available w/resume. Contact: Michael Gibbs, (212) 768-5413, NY.

● **CREATIVE SCORING, MUSICAL DIRECTION & ARRANGING** for film & video productions by Juilliard-trained, ASCAP award-winning composer. All styles. Contact: Alexander Lim, (212) 799-5222/869-2922, NY.

● **VIDEO & FILM TECH CREW:** Camera, lights, sound; best gear & references. Will package your whole project. Call: Doug, (212) 489-0232, NY.

● **PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT:** Can offer assistance in development, publicity campaigns, developing marketing & promotional materials. Contact: Kristen Simone, (212) 289-8299, NY.

● **VIDEOGRAPHER** w/new Sony DXC-M3 3-tube camera ready to shoot docs, dance & other projects. Deck, mikes, accessories & crew as needed; rates negotiable. Contact: L. Goodsmith, (212) 898-8157, NY.

● **GAFFER** available for docs, low-budget features & shorts. 12 yrs. experience in theater, video & film. Contact: Chris, (212) 499-3219, NY.

● **ASST. ART DIRECTOR** currently freelancing in print seeks work in production design. Some film experience. Resume, portfolio available. Contact: Eva, (212) 724-3879, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** w/Arri 16Sr, fast lenses & lights. Fluent in French, Spanish. Negotiable rates. Contact: Pedro Bonilla, (212) 662-1913, NY.

● **NEWS CREW AVAILABLE** w/16mm & ¾" production gear. Professional credits on request Contact:

Pacific St. Films, 630 Ninth Ave., NY NY 10036, (212) 875-9722.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** for fiction documentary. Fully equipped including Aaton 7LTR, Cooke 10.4-52, 16 or S16, Super Speed, L. T1.3 Reasonable rates. Contact: Igor Sunara, (212) 249-0416, NY.

● **PENNY WARD/VIDEO:** Rentals—Sony DXC-1800 camera, Beta 1 Portapak mike & monitor w/operator, \$150/day; same w/VO-4800 deck, \$175/day. Transfers—½" Beta to ¾", \$10/hr. Viewing—½" Beta & ¾", \$5/hr. Editor—\$10/hr. Call: (212) 228-1427, NY.

● **CAMERA ASSISTANT** w/Aaton 7 LTR for hire. Lighting & grip package available. Contact: John, (914) 473-0633, NY.

● **RESEARCHER:** Access & familiarity w/all NYC libraries & Library of Congress in DC. Efficient & meticulous w/background in history, political economy & filmmaking. Rate negotiable. Contact: Danny, (212) 924-4711, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/16mm Aaton & lights available to work w/independents on doc & narrative films. Negotiable rates. Contact: East Marion Films, (212) 420-0335, NY.

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● **DISTRIBUTION/SALES DIRECTOR AT APPALSHOP:** Aggressive, experienced salesperson/manager sought for distribution of Appalshop productions; doc films & video tapes on Appalachian region for educational markets. Responsible for developing & implementing yearly, comprehensive marketing plan for film/tape collection including promotion of new releases, development of new & expanded markets, maintenance customer relations, annual distribution budget, etc. Sales personality, writing skills, willingness to travel & ability to work

cooperatively a must. Commitment to Appalshop region very important. \$14-15,000 plus insurance & paid vacation. Contact: Appalshop Films, PO Box 743, Whitesburg KY 41858.

● **LABOR INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS** initiating entertainment development & production effort in Los Angeles. Headed by Harvey Kahn, formerly Director of Publicity & Public Relations at Disney Channel, primary focus is to develop properties & establish relationships w/LA-based writers, producers & talent "who want to tell stories of average working Americans." Contact: Nick DeMartino, LIPA/Washington DC, (202) 637-5334; Harvey Kahn/LA, (213) 662-9710.

● **CULTURE SHOCK**, new cable series from Cultural Communications beginning Fall 1984 is currently commissioning new works & acquiring existing material. Weekly, hour-long TV "Almanac" hosted by videophiles Clifford & Mimie, Culture Shock will present outrageous, eclectic mix of upbeat/offbeat film & video shorts; new techniques & approaches, all styles & subjects from sublime to ridiculous, avant-garde to rear guard, high-brown to low-brow. "Broadcast quality" less important than originality. Submit work in any format. Producers of work selected will be notified immediately & competitive per-play price negotiated. Contact: Tim Radford, Culture Shock, Box 2040, Middleburg VA 22117.

● **SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS:** Film/video indies & other "non-captives" earn cash selling informational reports in established multi-level direct-mail plan. Little time required; very flexible. Send SASE for free details. Contact: T. Jackson, PO Box 24368, Edina MN 55424.

● **CREW CALL:** Assistant cameraman, boom operator, production assistants willing to work for little or no pay on feature film project. Shooting pilot scenes in NYC, July 18-24. Contact: John Sherman, 228 West Broadway, NY NY 10013, (212) 431-8442.

## Publications

● **NEW YORK TIMES ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FILM 1896-1979:** Exhaustive compilation of *New York Times* articles spanning 8 decades of film news beginning w/announcement of Edison's Vitascope. 13 volumes of chronologically arranged articles cover art, history, technology, sociology & business of film. \$2000/set. contact: Times Books, NY Times Book Co., Inc., 130 Fifth Ave., NY NY 10011.

● **HOW TO MAKE CABLE TV WORK FOR YOU:** Step-by-step workbook for scholars, community access & local origination programmers teaches basics of TV production including scriptwriting procedures & samples, camera techniques, editing info, technical definitions & more. 80pp., softcover, \$6.50/ea. Discounts for orders of 20 or more. Contact: Direct Market Designs, PO Box 142, Island Lake IL 60042.

● **TALKING BACK:** Public Media Center's guide to broadcasting & the Fairness Doctrine "for people who are made as hell and aren't going to take it anymore." How to understand broadcast law, negotiate for free air time, complain to the FCC. Facts, advice, models & case studies of Fairness Doctrine in action; everything you need to use the broadcast media in the public interest. Researched, compiled & edited by community organizers & media activists. 158pp, \$12/ea., \$9/25 or more. Contact: PMC, 25 Scotland St., San Francisco CA 94133. For bulk orders only: (415) 434-1403.



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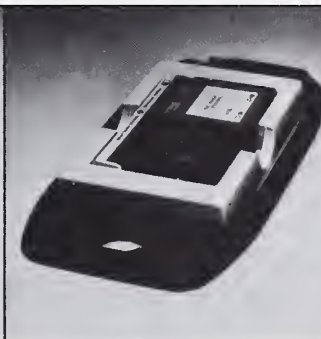
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● **SPIRAL:** New quarterly publication devoted to independent & avant-garde cinema beginning Oct. 1, 1984. Criticism, reviews, articles exploring historical aspects of indie filmmaking; surveys essential issues relating to development & future directions of avant-garde film. Charter subscriptions available, \$12.50/4 issues; \$17.50 for overseas & institutional subscriptions. After Oct. 1, subscriptions will be \$15 & \$20. Contact: SPIRAL, PO Box 5603, Pasadena CA 91107.

## Resources • Funds

● **NEA GRANT PROPOSAL DEADLINES:** Radio Production, July 20, 1984; Film/Video Production, Sept. 14, 1984. Contact: NEA, Media Arts, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington DC 20506, (202) 682-5452.

● **CPB ROUND III OPEN SOLICITATION:** Proposal Deadline: Aug. 17, 1984. Contact: Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 1111 16 St. NW, Washington DC 20036, (202) 293-6160.

● **NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS** individual grants in film/video production & screenwriting: guidelines & applications in early fall w/ submission deadline set tentatively for October, 1984. Contact: NYFA, 5 Beekman Pl, Ste. 600, NY NY 10038, (212) 233-3900.

● **NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS & GOVT. AGENCIES** in California are eligible for Foundation for Community Service Cable TV grants. Fall '84 deadline. Contact: Evelyn Pine, Program Director, FCST, 5616 Geary Blvd. Ste. 212, San Francisco CA 94121, (415) 387-0200.

● **APPLE COMPUTER** awards microcomputers & software to networks of non-profit organizations w/ annual budgets of less than \$500,00 or individual non-profit organizations w/ unique computer applications in performing or visual arts. Next deadline: July 15, 1984. Contact: Apple Computer, Community Affairs Program, 20525 Mariani Ave., M/S 23L, Cupertino CA 95014, (408) 973-2974.

● **MARJORIE BENTON PEACE FILM AWARD:** \$5000 grant supporting goal of international peace. Deadline: July 1, 1984. Applications available. Contact: Daresha Ullah, Film Fund, 80 East 11 St. Ste. 647, NY NY 10003, (212) 475-3720.

● **CULTURE SHOCK** will offer small production grants for film & videomakers 1985/1986. Contact: Tim Radford, Culture Shock, Box 2040, Middleburg VA 22117.

● **FILM TITLE SERVICE:** Typeset & art preparation, \$100; shot, develop & workprint, \$200. Call: Charlie, (212) 598-9111/982-3014, NY.

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● **MEDIA CONSULTING SERVICE:** Proposal coordination, script consultation, national marketing campaigns. Expert guidance for NEH, NEA, CPB, corporate & foundation proposals. Concept suitability, program design & proposal format for

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● **COMING OUT WEST?** NY indies planning to shoot in northern California or Bay Area can save time & money by contacting Karil Daniels to coordinate most effective, least expensive shoot possible. 10 years experience w/San Francisco independent film community. Contacts to quality freelance crew members, locations, equipment, services & supplies at best rates. Contact: Point of View Prods., 2477 Folsom St., San Francisco CA 94110; (415) 821-0435.

## Independent Bookshelf

**Don't look any further for essential media tomes. These titles are available at AIVF:**

### How to Enter & Win Video/Audio Contests

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### How to Enter & Win Film Contests

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### Cable TV Programming: Time to Sell or Sell Out

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Cable TV Info. Center  
\$7.50

### Copyright Primer

Joseph B. Sparkman  
Northwest Media Project  
\$3.50

### Frames: Statements by Independent Animators

George Griffin  
\$5.00

### Independent Feature Film Production

Gregory Goodell  
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### The Independent Filmmaker's Guide

Michael Wiese  
\$12.95 AIVF members  
\$14.95 non-members

### Motion Picture, TV & Theatre Directory

Motion Picture Enterprises  
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### Selected Issues in Media Law

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● **NEGATIVE MATCHING:** A & B rolls cut, scenes pulled for opticals etc. Color & b&w, reversal, negative stocks. Reliable service, reasonable rates. Call: (212) 786-6278, NY.

● **GOT A RIGHTS PROBLEM?** Want to use recording, film footage, obtain music license, get rights to literary work or photo? Barbara Zimmerman's service

provides solutions to these problems & more. Special free initial consultation for readers who mention they saw this ad in *The Independent*. Contact: Barbara Zimmerman, 145 West 86 St., NY NY 10024; (212) 580-0615.

● **OMNI PROPOS:** Specializing in design & construction of strange, unusual props and set pieces for film, video, photography. Contact: Richard Sands, 179 Grand St., Brooklyn NY 11211; (212) 387-3744.

● **PENNY WARD/VIDEO:** Documentation of dance, theater workshops & performances. Collaboration & consultation; ex-dancer sympathetic to dancers' needs. Video for dance research projects. Video resumes of choreography for grant applications. Contact: Penny Ward, (212) 228-1427, NY.

● **LEGAL SERVICES:** Experienced entertainment lawyer specializing in independent productions. Reasonable rates. Contact: Paula Schaap, (212) 777-6361/460-5015, NY.

● **LIGHTING, GRIP EQUIPMENT REPAIR/ MAINTENANCE:** Design special rigs & accessories. Experienced w/HMI lighting units; 4 yrs. experience w/Elmack dollies. Contact: Chris, (212) 499-3219, NY.

● **WHEN YOU'RE SHOOTING IN NY:** Key Light productions, independent film & video producers, can furnish you w/complete production or support staff; researchers, writers, PAs, camerapeople & crews. Our credits include network, PBS, independent & industrial productions. Call: Beth, (212) 581-9748, NY.

## Trims • Glitches

● **COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA** has named Alf Bold of Berlin Visiting Program Director of CLC for one year. Bold is currently Program Director of Arsenal Cinema, a non-profit film art center exhibiting work of independent filmmakers in Berlin. He will assume his new position in Sept. 1984, succeeding Simon Field of Great Britain.

● **NATIVE AMERICAN PUBLIC BROADCASTING CONSORTIUM** has been awarded a \$50,016 TV scripting grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities children's media program for a 12-mo. production of 6 30-min. children's cultural programs under the series title *I Am Different from My Brother*. Series is to be produced for public TV broadcast & educational use by all Indian organizations. NAPBC will provide updates of production progress & need for production people. Contact: Frank Blythe, Exec. Dir., NAPBC, Box 83111, Lincoln NE 68501, (402) 472-3522.

● **CONGRATULATIONS TO 6 AIVF MEMBERS** receiving project grants from Media Study/Buffalo. Producers were among 13 chosen from 200 proposals submitted in current funding cycle. The winners are: Christine Choy, \$10,000 for video documentary *Adopted Son: The Murder of Vincent Chin*; Juan Downey, \$5000 for videodisc project *Hopscotch*; Shigeko Kubota, \$5000 for *Niagara Falls*, a 4-channel video installation; Esti Marpet, \$2500 for *The Desert*, an impressionistic documentary of the Sinai Desert; Tom Miller, \$2500 for a media/performance piece, *Democracy in America*; & Edin Velez, \$5000 for *As Is: Out of Order*, a personal video essay on New York City. All 6 artists are from NYC. Funding for project grants is from National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts & Media Study/Buffalo, 207 Delaware Ave., Buffalo NY 14202, (716) 847-2555. ■



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# THE INDEPENDENT

SEPTEMBER 1984,  
VOLUME 7, NUMBER 8

*Publisher:* Lawrence Sapadin  
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*AIVF/FIVF STAFF MEMBERS:* Lawrence Sapadin, executive director; Robert Aaronson, festival director; Andrea Estepa, membership services; Mary Guzy, administrative director; Sol Horwitz, Short Film Showcase project administrator; Susan Linfield, Short Film Showcase administrative assistant.

*AIVF/FIVF BOARDS OF DIRECTORS:* Robert Richter, president; William Greaves, vice president; Lillian Jimenez, chair; Peter Kinoy, secretary; Pearl Bowser; St. Clair Bourne; Christine Choy; Loni Ding; Howard Petrick; Lawrence Sapadin (ex officio); Richard Schmichen; Barton Weiss.

**A Publication of  
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&  
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**Cover:** Hope springs eternal: South Vietnamese General Nguyen Khanh with General Maxwell Taylor (l) and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara (r) in South Vietnam, March 1964. Within a year, Khanh was deposed and exiled. Susan Linfield's article investigates the three-ring controversy between Accuracy in Media, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and public television's "Vietnam" series, and analyzes the deeper political divisions festering beneath it all. Photo: Francois Sully, WGBH.

### AIVF welcomes . . .

Beginning with this issue, *The Independent's* editor is Martha Gever. Former associate editor of *Afterimage*, published by the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, NY, she has written extensively on independent film, publishing and arts funding.

Robert Aaronson and Debra Goldman also joined the staff of AIVF during the summer. Aaronson is now director of the Festival Bureau and Information Services. He is a freelance writer and publicist who has been on the production and administration staffs of various film and video organizations in New York. Debra Goldman brings her expertise as a writer on media issues to her new job as program coordinator for AIVF's seminars and screenings. She will continue to contribute to *The Independent*.

### New AIVF Board Members

Three new members have been elected to AIVF's board of directors for 1984-85. They are: Barton Weiss from Dallas, Texas, and St. Clair Bourne and Christine Choy from New York City. Also chosen were new board alternates Dara Birnbaum of New York, Tom Bliss of Los Angeles, and Robert Marinassie of Pittsburgh. William Greaves, Lillian Jimenez, and Robert Richter were re-elected.

*The Independent* welcomes letters to the editor. Send them to FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



## LETTERS

## Conscience Decisions

To the editor:

I read with dismay the short piece in your June issue [page 20] entitled "Independents & South Africa." The question of whether or not filmmakers should provide prints to South African festivals is a complicated one, and we need more than the African National Congress' vague threats of retribution if we are to make informed and conscientious decisions. As a white filmmaker whose last several films have dealt with black subjects, I feel in a somewhat tenuous position offering information and advice on this matter. Still, I've agonized over these questions a good deal, and some of what I have to say may prove helpful.

First, in my opinion, serious independent films should not be grouped with paintings, rock concerts, or even Hollywood movies when we are discussing the concept of a cultural and economic boycott. Many of us make films which are akin to books in that they provide ideas as much as entertainment, and ideas are what the people of South Africa desperately need. Who benefits if films about nuclear power, labor struggles, Nicaragua, apartheid, or even our own democratic institutions are kept out of South Africa? Certainly not the people. Only the South African government benefits, along with the system which it is trying to perpetuate.

Second, since neither filmmakers nor festival organizers profit financially from festival screenings (unless, of course, the screenings are used as a springboard for commercial distribution—an even more complicated issue where South Africa is concerned), there is no question here of what we have to gain, only of what we have to give. From the evidence I've seen (partly supplied by Britain's Channel Four Television, for whom two of my last three films were made), the festivals in Durban and Cape Town appear to be among the few places in South Africa where blacks and whites can sit down together, view progressive works from outside the country, and discuss the radical implications of many of those works. The organizers of the Durban International Film Festival in particular have struggled hard against apartheid by resisting censorship, by staging additional film screenings in black townships, and even by encouraging filmmaking among young, black South Africans. (The Johannesburg Film Festival, on the other hand, does not appear to have a commitment to multiracial audiences and should therefore be avoided.)

Two years ago, the Durban festival lobbied vigorously to get my film *Black Wax*, featuring Gil Scott-Heron. After consulting with Gil, I instructed the festival they could have *Black Wax* only if, 1. All screenings were multiracial, 2. Special screenings were held in the black community, and 3. The film was not cut or censored in any way (including Gil's song, "Johannesburg," his discussion of the rape of Africa by

white people, and his declaration of support for "bloody" resistance in South Africa). To our amazement, the festival was able to get the film approved by the government censor, and the two other requests were considered routine. More recently, *Black Wax* was shown at the Cape Town International Film Festival where white reviewers called it "an extraordinarily powerful movie" and praised Gil's calls for black "liberation." Clearly, these are not the sort of responses I had been led to expect, but then few of us have firsthand knowledge of what really goes on in a country like South Africa. And even if we did, as an American, I feel a bit hypocritical throwing stones at people for the sins of racial discrimination.

Surely there cannot be a single person reading this magazine who does not find the practice of apartheid absolutely abhorrent. Yet there is more to this issue than being for or against the boycott, for or against the aspirations of the oppressed South African majority. Big-budget Hollywood movies will continue to be shown in South Africa, regardless of any boycott, and will continue to give unending solace to the South African government, and unending profits to Hollywood studios. The question for independents is: if black South Africans and their progressive white allies are pleading for our support, and if we as independents can show that support by sending them a handful of serious and provocative films—especially films which can be related to their own current struggles—should we not, in fact, do so? In many instances (though perhaps not all), I think that we should.

Difficult as it sometimes is to believe, film is still a very powerful medium, and we must take responsibility for the ways in which our works affect our audiences, both directly and indirectly. But this not only means avoiding complicity with the aims of repressive regimes; it also means not bowing to the demands of any political organization, no matter how well-intentioned. As independents, we should share information on topics such as this, debate alternative courses of action, and then respect each other's committed choices. My own committed choice is not to "do nothing"—as seems to be the dominant political advice at the moment—but to provide whatever small encouragement I can to the forces of resistance in an oppressed society. For me, this is what being an independent is all about.

—Robert Mugge  
Springfield, PA

## AFI Accounting

To the editor:

We welcome the continuing discussion about the American Film Institute, its new campus, and its responsibilities toward the independent community. The article in the June issue ["The American Film Institute: Mid-Life Crisis?," by Debra Goldman] deserves a response—to the

## Foreign Correspondence Arrives

In last month's issue of *The Independent* we mentioned an innovative new traveling video package on Central America. The show is called "Foreign Correspondence" and has been organized by independent producers. This month, you'll have a chance to see it in action on Long Island, NY. "Foreign Correspondence" will be at the Port Washington Public Library, 249 Main St. in Port Washington, through September. You can also see a screening of the "Foreign Correspondence" reel at the Inter-Media Center, 370 New York Ave., in Huntington. If you would like more information on the package, contact Skip Blumberg, (212) 732-1725.

degree that space in this section allows.

First of all, the institute's new campus was designed to not only serve as a production facility and school for fellows at the Center for Advanced Film Studies, but to provide a base of operations that could be used by *all* of AFI's constituencies, including independent film and videomakers. This was not possible at our former location.

Recognizing the financial handicaps under which all independent productions labor, the institute has on numerous occasions extended the hospitality of its campus—either for temporary office space, or "at cost" use of its screening facilities—to independent artists. We intend to continue this policy, and hope that more and more artists will avail themselves of the institute's facilities.

Second, we would like to point out that Television and Video Services has established a major bridge to the independent video community in this country, and provided, through its annual National Video Festival, one of the most visible showcases for independent video artists in recent years. This year the program also established both a Television Laboratory to explore innovative ideas for television programming and a series of residencies for video artists.

Finally, I take exception to one part of the article that reflects badly, and inaccurately, on the institute's financial management. In September 1981, AFI received a Ford Foundation grant of \$14,472 for support of the New American Cinema Showcase, a tour of independent feature films to cities around the country. The grant was designated for direct expenses, not staff salaries, overhead, or fundraising efforts, and was dispensed (for promotion, local personnel, visiting filmmakers, and supplies) as follows: Houston engagement—\$5,972.00; Atlanta engagement—\$6,510.20; New Orleans engagement—\$1,989.80. There was no question of the grant money ever being "lost"; in fact, the money was properly spent on the New American Cinema project, and was responsibly accounted for.

While I do welcome a discussion of the goals and priorities of the AFI, I hope that we can avoid misinformation, especially in the fiscal area—or at least that we can expect writers to verify allegations before printing them.

All non-profits have an obligation to their funders to be fiscally and morally responsible. I personally accept this responsibility and have



steadfastly sought to create a sense of trust between AFI and its funders, so I appreciate the opportunity to set the record straight on this matter.

—Jean Firstenberg  
Director, American Film Institute  
Los Angeles

**Debra Goldman replies:**

I am gratified that my article provided the occasion for director Firstenberg to "set the record straight" regarding the 1981 Ford Foundation grant to AFI. However, my intention was not to claim that these funds were misused. Rather, the point was that the Exhibition staff was kept in the dark as to their disposition. The internal staff memo which questioned the whereabouts of the monies to which I referred in my article went unanswered by the administration. Thus, as far as the staff was concerned, the funds were "lost." Particularly during a period of financial hardship, such a managerial style can only undermine the confidence of employees who are working to achieve the institute's goals. The issue seems less one of morality, than of morale.

**Montreal World's "Racism"**

**To the editor:**

Kathleen Hulser's article on the Montreal International Festival of Nouveau Cinema [*The Independent*, June 1984] was intellectually soft and unanalytical; it totally missed the dismissive arrogance of festival directors Dimitri Epides and Claude Chamberlan. Both are known for their disrespect toward Third World filmmakers and political questions regarding these issues. Hulser neglected to mention that both of these budding curatorial manipulators are using [Montreal World Film Festival director] Serge Losique as a father figure. It was Losique who brought Montreal the racist South African film *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. Chamberlan and Epides did not publicly oppose the showing of this film.

It is politically bankrupt to let liberals like Hulser be influenced by the "shopping babushkas" on St. Laurent rather than the unethical anti-Third World views held by Chamberlan and Epides.

—Julian Samuel  
Montreal

**Open Letter to AIVF**

On a recent trip to the Los Angeles area, I had the opportunity to meet with a West Coast AIVF member, Tom Bliss, and a number of interesting questions arose over the organization's attitudes and policies concerning this other half of our country. From reading *The Independent*, and not having access to AIVF's decision-making process and seminars, Bliss frankly feels that AIVF maintains an East Coast/New York chauvinism or bias.

This viewpoint can be debated, but the question remains: can AIVF do more to attract members from other parts of the US? If so, it would mean a larger financial and political

power base from which to expand services and a national exchange network between independents having far-reaching possibilities.

The following suggestions, distilled from my conversation with Bliss, reflect a West Coast perspective on what can be done:

- Have a liaison person in the Los Angeles/San Francisco area to collect and disseminate information, and to serve the interests of independent producers in the area, as well as those visiting on business from other parts of the country.
- Broaden coverage of individuals and topics pertinent to West Coast independents, and possibly host a seminar in the near future with the cooperation of the American Film Institute or the Independent Feature Project/West.
- Broaden AIVF visibility in the larger commercial industry, as AFI has done with interesting results. There are more and more people who work in the film and video industry and who are doing independent work on the side, as evidenced by the amount of programs shown at EZTV, a video theater in Hollywood.

These three suggestions would be relatively easy to implement but could turn the page on a new chapter in AIVF's history. If AIVF doesn't fulfill the needs of West Coast independents, another organization certainly will.

—Michael A. Mannetta  
New York City

**CORRECTIONS**

Jacqueline Leger's report on the International Mannheim Week in the June issue of *The Independent* inadvertently misrepresented questions concerning Jacki Ochs' film *The Secret Agent*. The final sentence of the seventh paragraph should have read, "... a major concern was that the film's title didn't make sense in German." We regret any misunderstanding this error may have caused.

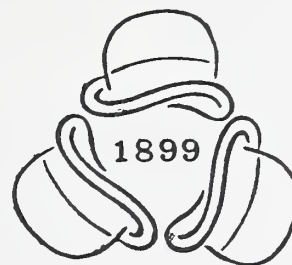
We mistakenly published an announcement for the Bay Area Filmmakers' Showcase in the July/August *Independent*. The showcase will not take place this year.



To all independent video & film folk who send materials to "In & Out of Production": If you have striking b/w production stills from your project, preferably in vertical format with good contrast, send them along with the written copy to Mary Guzy, Notices Editor. Please indicate whether or not you wish the photo returned & label the still with title, director, actors, situation, return address & phone number. Let's have a full-page photo spread of recent independent work!!

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## MEDIA CLIPS

# Private Property Over Public Trust

Journalist and press critic A.J. Liebling once remarked that freedom of the press was a great institution—particularly if you happened to own one. A.J. was no doubt turning in his proverbial grave this summer when FCC chair Mark Fowler cited “First Amendment considerations” as a motive for the commission’s most recent move toward deregulating the broadcast industry. By a unanimous decision, the commissioners voted to lift limits on commercial time, eliminate non-entertainment programming “quotas,” and abolish ascertainment and program logging requirements.

The move is a major blow to the long-standing compromise established by the FCC between the demands of free enterprise and the necessary limitations of the broadcast spectrum. Traditionally, the nation’s airwaves have been considered a public trust, licensed to private individuals in exchange for a commitment to serve the public interest. The message of Fowler’s FCC appears to be that these are now merely private property.

The irony of the decision is that even under the old regulations, license renewal was essentially *pro forma*. As long as licensees offered less than 16 minutes of commercials per hour, and at least five percent news and public affairs, five percent local programming, or 10 percent non-entertainment programming in their schedule, they could expect approval from the FCC’s Mass Media Bureau. Those who failed to fall within those guidelines did not necessarily face license revocation but were subject to review by the full commission. But now these requirements have been eliminated. In place of these rules, licensees will have to submit quarterly reports showing they have addressed “five to 10” community issues over the previous three-month period. The result may well make the already muddy criteria for license renewal even more unclear and arbitrary.

The ascertainment and program logging requirements, the other area affected by the decision, were originally designed to make broadcasters accountable to the public. The former mandated that licensees meet with local citizens and community groups to determine the needs of the residents of their broadcast area; the latter required that the public have access to programming records. These obligations, characterized by the FCC as time-consuming and ineffective, have been lifted as well.

House Telecommunications Subcommittee chair Timothy Wirth disagrees. Program logs,

he pointed out after the decision was announced, are a necessary business practice, and the singular effect of eliminating the requirement will be to withhold such information from the public. Labeling Fowler the “James Watt of the airwaves,” a spokesperson from the Washington public interest group Telecommunications Research and Action Center has announced its intention to appeal. But the group may face an uphill fight, as the courts recently upheld parallel deregulation of commercial radio.

Broadcasters have reacted to the ruling with subdued pleasure, with many claiming that the move will have little impact on their policies. The Radio and Television News Directors’ Association noted with satisfaction that “news is financially successful,” and, therefore, unlikely to suffer from the new regulatory scheme. As for the specter of increased commercial interruptions or even half-hour commercials—now a theoretical possibility—industry insiders claim that the pressures of non-commercial pay cable and home video will help keep the lid on such expansion.

The FCC’s action is the latest victory in the Reagan administration’s campaign to get the government “off the back of private business” and “let the marketplace decide.” In support of these articles of faith, the commission contends that the “communications revolution” has rendered the policing of the airwaves obsolete. The presence of so many choices in the video marketplace, the argument runs, will itself guarantee the diversity and community responsiveness heretofore safeguarded by the government. Yet, like so many of the Reagan administration’s assertions, this one does not stand up to empirical tests. A quick flip through the cable dial or a stroll down the aisles of a videocassette retailer will show that there is, indeed, more video entertainment—but in most cases it’s more of the same. Fowler crows that in the new marketplace the consumer is left to make his or her own choices. But he forgets that choice is meaningless unless there are alternatives from which to choose.

—Debra Goldman

## The Night They Raided A Space

The May opening of the British/Canadian Video Exchange Show in Toronto brought the participating arts organizations the kind of press coverage video exhibitors crave but seldom re-

ceive. Unfortunately, in the case of the gallery A Space—the show’s chief organizer—the publicity attracted an audience the video community could have done without: the Ontario Board of Censors. On May 31, after repeated visits to the gallery, officials of the Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Relations’ Theatres Branch, under whose auspices the Censor Board operates, seized the evening show’s tapes and a videotape recorder used in a multi-monitor installation piece. The grounds given for the seizure were A Space’s refusal to obtain a license as a public exhibitor of moving tape media and to submit its tapes to the Censor Board prior to showing.

The confiscation provoked immediate outrage from the show’s Canadian curator, Jane Wright, who spent two years planning the exchange with London Video Arts, a British media center. “A Space is an art gallery,” she maintained. “I am an artist who has organized an important cultural exchange, with funds provided by the Canada Council and the British Arts Council. The action is an international embarrassment and will certainly damage the reputation of all arts institutions in the province. When the province moves with such a heavy hand into an art gallery, what next? Are they going to be judging paintings and drawings?”

The program in question, entitled “Sexuality, Stereotypes and Self-Image,” included Sandra Goldbacher’s *Polkadots and Moonbeams: Framed Youth*, produced by the Lesbian and Gay Video Project Collective; *Still Life No. 1*, by Zoe Redman and Steve Littman; Belinda Williams’ *The Way We Are*; and *Tense/Shout (Drowning in a Sea of Images)*, by Jeremy Welsh.

Despite the potentially controversial nature of the material, the Censor Board says it did not object to the content of the tapes, but claimed confiscation was done on principle. The gallery did not allow the seizure to stop the show, and the remaining screenings took place without incident. However, the removal of the VCR did result in the shutdown of Tina Keane’s installation *In Our Hands*, which deals with the women of Greenham Common. Curator Wright had argued that the work, consisting of 12 monitors in a grid, was a sculptural, not theatrical, exhibit, and thus not subject to the Theatres Branch’s jurisdiction. But Mary Brown, Theatres Branch director and chair of the Censor Board, did not buy this line of reasoning, noting that Ontario’s laws do not recognize the existence of video art. “There’s no question,” Brown says. “It’s a moving image on a moving screen.”

Brown views A Space’s refusal to comply with the licensing requirement as incomprehensible intransigence. “There was no question of censorship. All we requested is that they apply for a license. It can be done by filling out a form, and in most cases we don’t even view the material. Our inspectors visited the gallery several times, asking them to apply, but they said no. We had no choice but to seize the equipment and the tapes. It seems to me that they were initiating a confrontation. Why else would they refuse?”



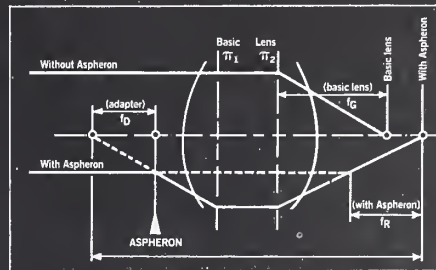
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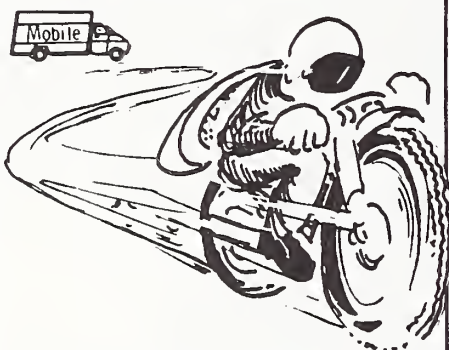
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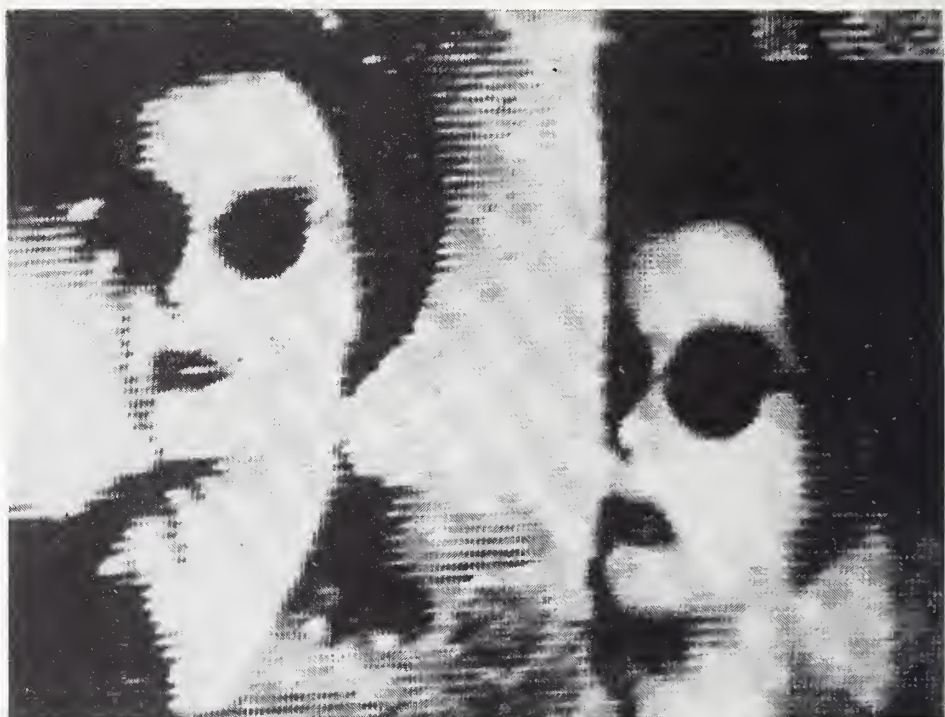
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Sandra Goldbacher's *Polkadots and Moonbeams* was too risqué for the Ontario censors.

"Brown's line—that the licensing process is totally benign, equivalent to applying for a dog license—is a total obfuscation," replies Lisa Steele, a member of A Space's board of directors. "They maintain that the process called 'authorization by documentation' does not entail censorship, but it's simply not true. They can and do demand prior screening of materials."

Steele's assertion is corroborated by other film and video exhibitors in Toronto. Several years ago, the Funnel Experimental Film Theatre was threatened with shutdown unless it agreed to cut a scene from a Michael Snow film, while the Ontario Gallery of Art has twice been asked to make cuts in its film presentations. The gallery's audio-visual coordinator, Cathy Jonasson, noted, "We submit our things to the Censor Board, but we don't like it. It's repugnant to us. If they cut, we don't show the piece; it's our way of saying we won't show a damaged work of art."

Steele also disputed Brown's claim that A Space created a confrontational situation. "We've been showing tapes at the gallery for 13 years, and we never heard a word from the Theatres Branch. All of a sudden, two hours before the our opening, they call us saying we must bring the tapes over right away. We told them that since the opening was a private party, they had no jurisdiction. When the show opened to the public, inspectors kept showing up and threatening us. They even called our major funders [the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council] and demanded they force us to comply. One night they showed up with plainclothes police. It was a real scene." If there was a confrontation, Steele asserted, it was of the Theatres Branch's making. "They intended to make an example of us."

A June 11 hearing on the case before the board resulted in the return of the VCR on the grounds that A Space is a charitable institution and, therefore, exempt from the seizure provision. At the same time, the board decided that the tapes, which are British property, would remain in the Canadian government's hands. In a statement made after the hearing, Brown said she would consider returning the tapes to the artists within 15 days, but in light of A Space's publicly declared intention to press their suit in court, she subsequently changed her mind. The case is scheduled for hearing this month.

Fortunately, the Toronto arts community does have reason to hope that the A Space flap will be the Censor Board's swan song. Thanks to a challenge mounted last year by the Ontario Film and Video Appreciation Society, the censorship statute was declared unconstitutional in county court; the decision was later upheld on appeal in provincial court. The Ministry responded by introducing legislation designed to "clarify" its powers—and at the same time extend jurisdiction into the home video market. That legislation has since been withdrawn. This fall, the case will go before the Supreme Court. But by that time, A Space hopes to have returned the tapes to their owners in Great Britain.

—DG

### Patron-izing

The first major media grants were awarded by foundation giants Rockefeller and Carnegie in 1939 and 1940, writes Peggy Kanas in *Grants Magazine*. The project: three years of sociological observation to "study the people of Hollywood and the patterns of movie-making as one might study the people of Tahiti." Today, the



**AIVF thanks . . .**

Richard Hartzell, Stonybrook, NY;  
Eric Breitbart, New York, NY;  
Matt Clarke, New York, NY  
for their contributions.

media arts remain somewhat of a puzzle to the foundation world. The very nature of film and video is problematic to foundation culture: creative and unpredictable, difficult to control or schedule, potentially controversial, and expensive. Many foundations have responded to the problem with a rigid policy: "We don't fund media."

But a number of people from member organizations of the Council on Foundations are trying to change all that with their own media production, aptly titled, *We Don't Fund Media*. The 25-minute tape was produced by Oralea Wachter and is accompanied by the handbook, "How to Fund Media," by Vivian Kleiman and David Shepard. "I think it's an effective fundraising tool for independent producers," said AIVF's fundraiser Mary Guzy, after viewing the tape. Steve Allen narrates and opens with a song straight out of the *Foundation Directory*: "We're a very small foundation with an interest in conservation. Ecology, ecology." The tape features five foundation executives and clips from successful films like *In Our Water*, *Harlan County, USA*, and *Code Grey*.

The project was conceived in 1982 during a workshop on media at the annual Council of Foundations meeting, according to Carolyn Sachs, executive director of the Benton Foundation. Benton pledged \$25,000 to the project and a matching amount was contributed by 18 other foundations.

The tape and handbook are available at discount prices: the tape sells for \$35 to Council

and Foundations members and \$50 to non-members, and rents for \$10 to members, \$20 to non-members. The handbook costs \$5. For distribution information, contact: B.J. Stiles, Council on Foundations, 1828 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 466-6512. —Renee Tajima

**OMB Rewrites the Rules**

Lobbying for public television and cable television legislation, producing partisan videotapes and films, collecting and distributing information on legislation or activities of legislators—the work of many nonprofit media organizations and some independent producers receiving federal grant support—is now subject to a new set of rules issued by the federal executive branch Office of Management and Budget. After 15 months of deliberations and revisions, OMB Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations," went into effect on May 29. The final revision incorporates a number of changes from the original proposal, published in January 1983, followed by a second version in November 1983. Both earlier drafts entailed stringent restrictions on broadly defined categories of political activity undertaken by federally-funded nonprofit organizations. The former disallowed "lobbying and political advocacy," including any costs used in part for such activities (e.g., an office copier or staff salaries); the November version was modified to disallow "lobbying and related activities"—terminology which was subsequently criticized as ill-defined and possibly unconstitutional. In the final rules, disallowed activity is designated as "lobbying" and "costs associated with unallowable lobbying."

The precise effects of these refinements of the regulations governing nonprofit lobbying—first promulgated by the Carter administration in

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Steve Allen serenades America's foundations in *We Don't Fund Media*



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June 1980—are as yet unpredictable. According to the OMB's description and defense of A-122, published in the April 27, 1984, *Federal Register*, "The intent behind the revision is nondiscriminatory, and its effects are politically neutral... it is not intended to discourage or in any way penalize organizations from lobbying efforts conducted with their own funds." As a counterpoint to such claims, OMB Watch, a Washington-based nonprofit news network, in a May 3 memo outlines the gray areas in the OMB document and the new limitations placed on federally-funded nonprofit groups and projects. For instance, "OMB's rules would disallow the costs of 'legislative liaison' activities that seek to monitor actions of elected officials, such as: attending legislative sessions or committee hearings; gathering information regarding legislation (e.g., collecting copies of bills, researching the legislative record, calling about bill status); analyzing the effect of legislation 'when such activities are carried on in support of or in knowing preparation for an effort to engage in unallowable lobbying,'" or if these activities "can reasonably be inferred to have had a clearly foreseeable link with later lobbying." OMB Watch goes on to ask, "How specific does the 'foreseeable link' have to be?" A-122 provides no answer.

OMB also prohibits "pre-introduction lobbying"—any activity that has a "reasonably foreseeable consequence of initiating legislative action." The boundaries defining this activity could encompass all kinds of communications which might eventually influence the drafting of legislation. A convincing film or videotape about a social problem could, in retrospect, fall within these vague parameters.

"Grass-roots lobbying" in the form of "publicity or propaganda" constitutes another category of disallowed activity. As explained by OMB Watch, analysis of legislation appearing in a nonprofit organization's newsletter—or in a film or videotape produced by a nonprofit receiving federal support—may be exempted if it "present[s] a fair and balanced analysis, not unsupported opinion, although it may conclude in favor or against the legislation analyzed; provide[s] facts and evidence adequate for readers to draw their own, independent conclusions; and do[es] not explicitly urge readers [or viewers] to action." OMB states that it does not consider "attempts to affect the *opinions* of the general public" as grass-roots lobbying, "if such attempts are not intended or designed in such fashion as to have a reasonably foreseeable consequence of leading to concerted action." But, OMB Watch cautions, "OMB's *lack* of an exemption for non-partisan analysis... leaves its status unclear, and with chilling effects" [emphasis added].

As for the political neutrality of the OMB measure, comments on earlier revisions, cited in the *Federal Register*, reveal the bias of the OMB initiative. Liberal groups such as the American Friends Service and the National Education Association contended that the proposed rules were vague, and, therefore, invite violations of First Amendment rights. Conservative

organizations like Taxpayers for Less Government, the United States Business and Industrial Council, and the Stockholder Sovereignty Society, are named as advocates for even more restrictive regulations for nonprofits. Clearly, minimizing government regulation—a constant component of Reaganite rhetoric—applies when business interests are at stake [see Debra Goldman's "Media Clip" on the recent FCC deregulation ruling in this issue], but not for social service and cultural groups.

For nonprofit media organizations, producers of nonprofit film or video projects, and nonprofit media publications which are supported by federal funds, the implications of Circular A-122 could be disquieting. Obviously, lobbying for any state or federal legislation—arts and humanities funding appropriations, as well as legislation concerning public television, cable television, or other communications issues—cannot be subsidized by any federal grant income. Any indirect cost staff (administrative) of an organization that devotes more than 25 percent of its compensated time in any one month to lobbying is required to keep "time logs, calendars, or similar records" even though no federal money is expended for these purposes. A federally-funded film or videotape which could be construed as having the "foreseeable consequence of leading to concerted action" to influence legislation—on the subject of abortion, say, or foreign policy—could be a target for an audit, for "cost recovery," and, at worst, "debarred" from future federal grants.

Despite OMB's assurances that "nothing in these neutral accounting principles provides any basis for concern that they will be applied in anything but an impartial, objective fashion," nonprofit federal grantees—especially any organization or project which could be cast as left wing or even liberal—should become acquainted with the details of this new bureaucratic obstacle course. Copies of the OMB Watch analysis of Circular A-122 can be obtained from that organization: OMB Watch/Focus Project, 1201 16th St. NW, Suite 405, Washington, DC 20036, for \$2.50 each. In the same memo, OMB Watch reports that both the House Government Operations Committee, chaired by Sen. Jack Brooks (D-Tex.), and the Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations, chaired by Sen. David Durenburger (R-Minn.) may hold hearings on the new rules. Since OMB is no longer accepting public comments, the group advises, "Public reaction should be addressed to Congress." —Martha Gever

## Sundance Seed Money

Financial support to independent producers has entered a new era. Participants in the Sundance Institute's Script Development and June Laboratory Programs will now be eligible to receive limited funds for strategic loans and completion bonds, designed to improve opportunities for production financing. One million dollars has been contributed to the new Production Assistance Program by an impressive list of donors: the Rockefeller and the MacArthur

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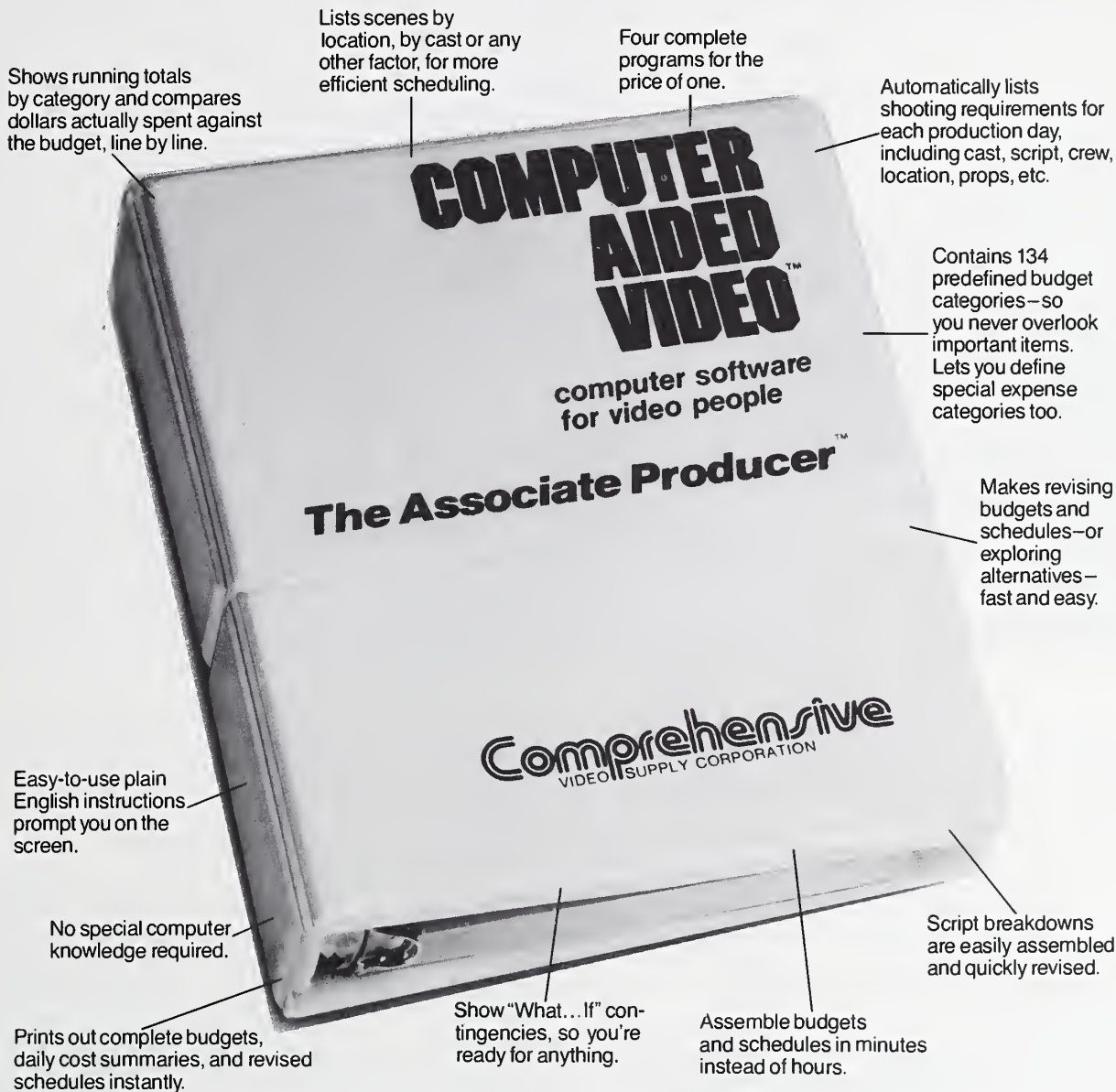
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The Production Assistance Program is a result of the severe financial realities behind the Sundance hoopla. The Institute is widely known for the top-flight creative support as well as for the star scenarists and directors who work with independents at the mountainside colony. "It's great to have gotten all that help from Sundance," explained filmmaker Pablo Figueroa, who developed the feature project *Blackout* in the Institute's first year but has not been able to raise sufficient production capital. "Until you get money, your film won't happen," he said. "The problem is, as a result of going to Sundance, independent producers got bigger ideas of what they could do." While Sundance was able to provide access to the studio community, many independent projects still did not sell to the types of investors needed for feature productions. According to Jennifer Walz, Sundance's managing director of programs, out of the 25 projects which have participated in the Sundance Program's first three years, only four have been produced. In addition, one is currently in production, and another is in preproduction.

Since \$1-million is often equivalent to the budget of an entire feature, direct grants were ruled out in favor of loans and financial guarantees to leverage greater amounts of money. According to Walz, "The fund evolved from our own experimentation, as well as studying the Australian Film Commission, which is able to assist a lot of projects with a small amount of capitalization." It is expected that the Production Assistance Program fund will be able to support eight to 10 projects per year. It is limited to filmmakers who have participated in Sundance. —RT

### **The Price Is Right**

The Polaroid Corporation has announced a new \$10,000 award for outstanding artistic achievement in video. Polaroid says the award, to be administered by the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, is designed to emphasize its growing dedication and commitment to the video field. ICA director David A. Ross will choose the winning piece in conjunction with curators Kathy Huffman and Bob Riley.

Ross would not specify what qualifications the winning video should possess beyond saying that it should have a combination of intellectual, technical and aesthetic qualities, and that it "expand your understanding of the art." He added, "If it's good, you'll know it."

According to Ross, there will be no submission or application process, in order to avoid unwieldy bureaucracy. Instead, the three judges are touring the nation to screen tapes. However, independent videomakers may submit their work for screening to the ICA. The selected piece, to be announced this fall, will premiere at the ICA and then circulate world-wide. Specific sites have not yet been identified, but will be chosen based upon the nature of the winning tape.

—Claudia L. Gomez ■

SEPTEMBER 1984



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## WEST COAST

# Independents Test PBS Waters on the Bay

FENTON JOHNSON

In the 1970s, as funds for locally produced programs dried up, Bay Area public television stations and independent producers eyed each other as potential competitors for an ever-shrinking pie. Relations between independents and San Francisco's KQED sank to the point where many local producers considered the station an obstacle to serious work. A recent flurry of support from Bay Area stations indicates that a more enlightened attitude may now be functioning. In the past year alone, KQED has given substantial postproduction support to at least three major projects. To the south, San Jose's KTEH continues its bolder—though smaller—program of across-the-board support. "Definitely, we see it to independents' advantage and ours to have a more positive relationship," said Pam Porter, KQED's broadcast programs administrator. While that station has long had a part-time staffperson working with independent producers, eight months ago Porter was hired as a full-time liaison.

But even with its commitment of staff time and resources, KQED refuses to bind itself to a fixed policy of financial support for independent production. "Our support is strictly dictated by our financial situation," said broadcast projects director Judy Flannery. KQED limits

its assistance to providing postproduction facilities and public television distribution efforts. "It would be wrong for us to be a funding agency for independent production," Flannery said.

KTEH, on the other hand, earns high marks from independents for its willingness to go out on just that fundraising limb. With Jon Else's *The Day After Trinity: J. Robert Oppenheimer and the Atomic Bomb*, KTEH stepped in precisely where KQED feared to tread. "At \$30,000, I'd reached the end of my fundraising rope," Else recalled. "KTEH raised another \$120,000. Without them, the film wouldn't have been made." Else underscored the value of the station name in raising the additional money.

Stressing that *Trinity* was a "once-in-five-years film," KTEH executive producer Peter Baker nonetheless relishes the excitement generated by supporting high-quality independent productions from the outset: "We provide some independents a second wall to bounce their ideas off of. For others, we're a dipstick in to PBS waters. Either way, we prefer to be involved early on because, frankly, it's more fun." Baker is bolder than KQED staff in his commitment to outstanding independent production proposals.

## Darsa at CPB

Joshua Darsa has been named as the new associate director of News and Public Affairs for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Program Fund. He replaces John Wicklein. Darsa is former director of news and information at National Public Radio and a former reporter for CBS-TV. Last year Darsa completed a National Endowment for the Arts cultural exchange fellowship in Japan, where he worked with the public television network NHK and the commercial network, Tokyo Broadcasting System.

Since only established producers have coaxed substantial support from either station, memories abound of earlier, leaner days. KQED especially has been criticized for its timidity. "It's hardly tremendously brave of them to wait until the rough cut stage," one observer pointed out. "They get the credit and a good show for very little money." Flannery conceded that KQED has been cautious, but, he added, "Any public station that endorses a philosophy of supporting independents is taking an important stance, because the reality is that stations do not need independents. We have a glut of programming already." With his small staff and smaller budget, Baker is more charitable in his estimation of independents' role at KTEH. "Working with independents makes a limitless variety of projects available to us. On most of these we do little or no fundraising."

In the end, the difference in the two stations' approaches may be one of size and the attendant bureaucratic inertia of large institutions. "Even though no station is rich, it's ironic that KTEH—which is really hungry and threadbare—is taking the larger risks," said *Trinity*'s Else. Baker refused to comment on the policies of his richer, bigger neighbor, but he did note that "there's no question but that a smaller unit works more flexibly."

Careful though it may be, KQED is supporting independent projects more than ever—and going public with its efforts. "There's no question but that things are improving," said John Rogers, co-director of *Saxophone Diplomacy*, which received substantial postproduction support from the station. Rogers singled out Flannery and Porter for their help and enthusiasm, as did other producers KQED has supported.

That stations and indies compete at all is due to public television's abysmal funding outlook. However, stations have the choice of competing or cooperating with producers. Independents' responsibility now becomes reinforcing cooperative efforts wherever these may occur—by phone calls, letters, and lobbying. No doubt that will require working with parties who have not been entirely sympathetic in the past—to put it mildly. But by now independents should be experts in adapting to such circumstances. In this field, the game is never won—only the rules, and the sums of money, change.



John Rogers and Jim Mayer's *Saxophone Diplomacy* received substantial postproduction support from KQED.

Jacki Ochs



# Amos Vogel on Cinema 16

*For 16 years, the best new daring independent films premiered at the pioneering showcase.*

What do Jerome Robbins, Marlon Brando, Siegfried Kracauer, Joshua Logan, Samuel Barber, Paddy Chayefsky, and Montgomery Clift have in common? Who introduced Michelangelo Antonioni, Roman Polanski, Lindsay Anderson, Robert Bresson, John Cassavetes, Stan Brakhage, Brian de Palma, Yasujiro Ozu, and Alain Resnais to US audiences? Where did Hans Richter, Alfred Hitchcock, Rudolf Arnheim, Willard Van Dyke, and King Vidor appear as speakers? Who first distributed the films of the American avant-garde and premiered these as well? The answer to these questions is Cinema 16, America's largest film society, which I co-founded with my wife Marcia Vogel in 1947, and which continued to operate for 16 years.

Billed as the showcase for independent cinema ("Films you cannot see elsewhere"), Cinema 16 concentrated almost exclusively on documentary and avant-garde, non-fiction, and offbeat cinema—plus a smattering of otherwise unavailable foreign and American "art" features. The society's stated purpose—expressed in manifestoes and public statements—was to counteract

the machine-made products of Hollywood and to help bring about social change by displaying radically new codes and new contents. During those years (1947-1963) there existed virtually no other outlets for independent filmmakers. Television was only beginning to become a household fixture during the earlier part of this period, and commercial theaters did not show such films.

With an average annual membership of 7,000, paying \$15.00 each for 16 programs, Cinema 16 was the first to present large-screen 16mm projection in public halls and 35mm movie theaters—at a time when 16mm was completely (and erroneously) identified with home movies. Cinema 16 rented theaters such as the Beekman, the Paris Theatre, the Murray Hill, as well as the 1,600-seat Fashion Industries Auditorium in New York City, and then each week laboriously installed two 16mm arc projectors run by a union projectionist. With this equipment we were able to show 16mm films in a regular theater, enlarged to fill a 35mm projection screen. Brightness and focus were such that

the audience could not tell the difference. Each screening lasted up to two hours and usually consisted of from three to seven shorts of varying lengths and genres.

## HIGH DRAMA

Never before or since Cinema 16's existence have so many people seen independent films on a regular basis in one location at one time. At the cavernous Fashion Industries Auditorium, for instance, two showings of the same program could be presented to a total of 3,400 each night. (This was where the famous Cinema 16 debate on "Poetry and Film" between Dylan Thomas, Maya Deren, Parker Tyler, and Arthur Miller took place.) Anyone who has studied audiences knows that reactions relate exponentially to the number of viewers, and the responses to our programs—favorable or unfavorable—were often highly dramatic and vociferous.

For independent filmmakers working during that period, life was difficult. A society strictly geared to financial gain and the production of commodities for mass markets always relegates independents to the fringe, where they proudly display the flag of individualism, and, of course, pay a price. But for many, there was never any doubt that they would follow the independent path. Others, of course, willingly or unwillingly, became co-opted by the commercial film industry.

Then, too, there were few if any foundations or grants for independents. Nor did the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities exist. One of the few exceptions was the Guggenheim Foundation, and Maya Deren, the catalyst of American experimental cinema, was the first filmmaker to receive a prestigious Guggenheim award. There were no television outlets as yet, and no West German television networks to contribute to or entirely finance US independent productions.

## KITTENS AND SAINTS

In addition, film exhibitors were governed by a censorship law which, with its antediluvian restrictions, limited the range of films which could be screened. Alexander Hammid and Maya Deren's lovely *The Private Life of a Cat* was officially banned as obscene by the New York State Censorship Board because it depicted the



Maya Deren was no pushover. She debated and exhibited at New York's famed avant-garde showcase, Cinema 16.



Courtesy Amos Vogel



Clash of the Titans: (left to right) Dylan Thomas, Arthur Miller, Willard Maas, Parker Tyler, Amos Vogel and Maya Deren.

birth of kittens; Roberto Rossellini's *The Miracle* was declared sacrilegious—and banned—because Anna Magnani believes herself to be impregnated by a saint. Cinema 16, however, was not subject to the censorship laws since it operated as a membership society. In fact, that was one of the reasons why it was so constituted. A second factor was that certain films or distribution sources were strictly limited to membership, non-profit use. Among these were those listed in the Psychological Cinema Register distribution catalogue, otherwise only available to doctors and other professionals. Cinema 16 was delighted to be able to show general audiences such marvelous, and often hilarious, films as *The Sex Life of Rhesus Monkeys* and *Neuroses and Alcohol*, a study of inebriated rats ineffectually failing to complete tasks set them by very serious researchers.

Unlike today, public notice of independent films was extremely rare. The *New York Times* and other newspapers did not review Cinema 16 programs. Bosley Crowther, the extremely influential and ignorant *Times* critic, never attended Cinema 16 screenings—perhaps he was too

busy lambasting Satyajit Ray's *Apu* trilogy as an "amateurish home-movie"; he also disliked Japanese films because their language sounded "too guttural." Otherwise, except for the contributions of Archer Winsten to the then very different *New York Post*—a true champion of independent and documentary cinema—public notice of independent work hardly existed.

For these reasons, the broadest exposure was accomplished through Cinema 16. In the case of avant-garde films and some documentaries, this also meant national distribution by Cinema 16 to film societies, church and labor groups, etc. Many of the other documentaries shown by Cinema 16 were already distributed by groups such as Contemporary Films, Brandon, and Film Image, but these almost exclusively served educational or professional showings.

#### THE EARLY AVANT-GARDE

I find it of great cultural interest that the majority of independents in those days produced what became known as avant-garde work. Of course, there were also a large number of documentary directors at work, but these, more often than not, were employees or owners of commercial production companies making films for a market—though this market might be educational as well. But the truly independent filmmakers—working alone, with no expectation of financial gain, making films to express their personal vision—were experimental filmmakers like Kenneth Anger, Sidney Peterson, James Broughton, Robert Breer, Bruce Conner, the unjustly disregarded Carmen D'Avino, Gregory Markopoulos, Willard Maas, Ed Emshwiller, the Whitney Brothers. Their attempts to destroy the dominant cinematic representational codes and deal with taboo-ridden themes infuriated that part of the Cinema 16 audience which preferred social documentaries. Simultaneously, the serious, often conventional formal codes and narratives of the documentarians brought protests from the avant-gardists in the audience. As a result, showings were never dull; disgrunt-

led members stalking out in the middle of a show had to be mollified in the lobby by Marcia Vogel, who often got involved in bitter arguments. Since, due to our membership structure, we were not subject to box office considerations, we never succumbed to audience pressures.

Since our aim was to display the entire amazing array of "The Other Cinema"—the non-Hollywood cinema—leading documentarians were represented as strongly as the avant-garde: Sidney Meyers, Helen Levitt, Van Dyke, Alexander Hammid, John Corty, the British documentary movement fostered by John Grierson (including Paul Rotha and Humphrey Jennings), as well as the "Free Cinema" of Tony Richardson, Lindsay Anderson, Karel Reisz, and Alain Tanner.

George Stoney's *All My Babies*, a tribute to black midwives in the South, was greeted with much enthusiasm, as were Roman Vishniac's ethereal micro-cinematic studies. We also presented Robert Gardner's ethnographic *The Hunters*, Michael Blackwood's earliest films, Shirley Clarke's *Bridges Go Round* and her first dance film, *A Moment in Love*. Henri Storck was represented by his poetic, lovely *The World of Paul Delvaux* (the Belgian surrealist painter) and Georges Rouquier (*Farrebique*) by his strange feature-length documentary *Lourdes and Its Miracles*, which seemed to visually "prove" that miracles are genuine. Kit Davidson, Paul Falkenberg, Herman Weinberg, Bert Haanstra, Lewis Jacobs, John Hubley, Joris Ivens, and Leo Seltzer were also shown.

#### BLOODY BEASTS

On one of my European visits, I discovered one of the great films of my life: Georges Franju's somber, lyrical, philosophical *The Blood of the Beasts*, a study of the Paris slaughterhouses and attitudes toward death, particularly the portrayal of actual death. From it, I again learned the importance of editing in relation to filmic

#### Call for Clips!

AIVF is producing a compilation tape of clips from independently produced films and videotapes which will premiere at our 10th anniversary celebration in February '85 (watch future issues of *The Independent* for more information on the festivities). Contributors to the tape will be listed in a commemorative program.

If you are interested in having your work included, please send a five-minute clip (no longer) on ¾" tape to Compilation Tape, AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012. All submissions must be accompanied by a \$5.00 handling fee. Deadline: December 1, 1984. A committee will further edit the clips based on time constraints. If you have any questions, call Andrea or Mary at AIVF, (212) 473-3400.



John Cassavetes' *Shadows* was a key work in the independent film movement.

Courtesy Amos Vogel





Cinema 16 and Literarisches Colloquium brought filmmakers to Berlin: (sitting from left) Stan Brakhage, Carmen D'Avino, Stan Vanderbeek, Ed Emshwiller; (standing from left) Bruce Conner, Shirley Clarke, Walter Hoellerer, Amos Vogel.

representation and effect. A horse is dragged to center-screen to be slaughtered; a worker raises a hammer to stun it. We hope that the point has been made, and we will go on to something else. Instead, in the next second, the very next shot, *Franju* forces us to view in close-up the actual, horrifying moment of impact of the hammer on the animal's head. This very moral filmmaker spares us nothing; this is a cinema of subversion, not mollification.

Every week new strangers would bring their films to our offices, where we had no set procedure and no forms to fill out. Friends or other filmmakers would draw my attention to newcomers, or I would read new names in magazines—even in political magazines, or art magazines from Japan. This is why I was able to show, for the first time in the US, a Nagisa Oshima film, *The Sun's Burial*. I can still recall my excitement when confronted by its visual bravura and uncompromising stare at contemporary mores. In relation to sex, the film went much further—visually and verbally—than American films. This is also why I corresponded for over a year with a Yugoslav student who was supposed to have made some unusual student films, and out this correspondence grew a lifelong friendship with that student—Dusan Makavejev.

We also found a first film by a promising American film school graduate, Brian de Palma, his delirious semi-surrealist travesty, *Wotan Wakes*; the Greek R. Coundourous with his incredible cinema verite study of people nonchalantly walking across beds of red-hot coals; Vittorio de Seta and his deeply humanist works; and Dan Drasin's sensational record of the first large demonstrations of the '60s in New York, *Sunday in the Park*.

Cinema 16 also co-sponsored, with City College (under Hans Richter's chairmanship), the annual Robert J. Flaherty documentary film award, and the annual Creative Film Foundation award for the best avant-garde films of the year (Maya Deren headed the foundation).

There were also annual trips to the George Eastman House in Rochester, NY, where for four days members watched otherwise unavailable masterpieces, 12 hours each day.

#### WONDER AND ORIGINALITY

In looking, with the help of my friend and collaborator Jack Goelman—today one of the best film researchers in the country—at the thousands of films that streamed into our office over this 16-year period, we learned how to distinguish quality from dross and let ourselves be conquered by the wonderful originality of so many films and filmmakers. Originality was, and remains, closely connected with unpredictability: the use of new codes of expression, avoiding the clutches of the conventional, and fresh approaches to plot, narrative, sound—the qualities that distinguish independent work from routine commercial productions.

After 16 years, Cinema 16 came to an end. Its operating expenses—film rentals, union projectionist, printing, salaries, and direct mail costs—had been rising constantly. Since we had no access to outside money or foundation grants, we realized that membership dues would have to be raised by more than 50%. This would have been economic suicide, and so Cinema 16 paid the price that pioneers so often have to pay.

Reflecting on the history of Cinema 16, I see and marvel at the creative upsurge, at enthusiastic audiences (many of whom went on to achievements in their own fields), at the many independent filmmakers whose aspirations were ground into dust by lack of income, or work, or being swallowed up by humdrum commercial production. I think of them when I see our present generation of filmmakers, who have so many more opportunities—yet still face inevitable heartbreak in a highly integrated capitalist society hostile to free personal creativity unless harnessed to selling products.

Will we ever break out of the mold of Profit Motive, Commercial Imperative, Bottom Line,

Product? Will the awesome free spirit of humans ever be allowed to offer us splendiferous visions instead of the calculated spurious anti-fantasies generated by the current crop of Hollywood directors and producers? Whatever the answers, I am content knowing that I contributed to the dissemination of such visions, passionate creativity, and radical challenges. To question what exists and to radically transform it remain our most compelling imperatives. ■

*Amos Vogel was the founder and executive secretary of Cinema 16 (1947-63), founder and first director of the New York Film Festival (1963-68), member of international juries, public television consultant, and, since 1973, professor at the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Film as a Subversive Art* (Random House) and writes a column on independent cinema for *Film Comment*.*

#### Jerome Grants

Congratulations to the New York City AIVF members who received Jerome Foundation film and video production grants, announced in July: Liza Bear, Lizzie Borden, Bill Brand, Anne Flournoy, and Al Robbins. Seven grants were awarded in all, totaling \$116,138.

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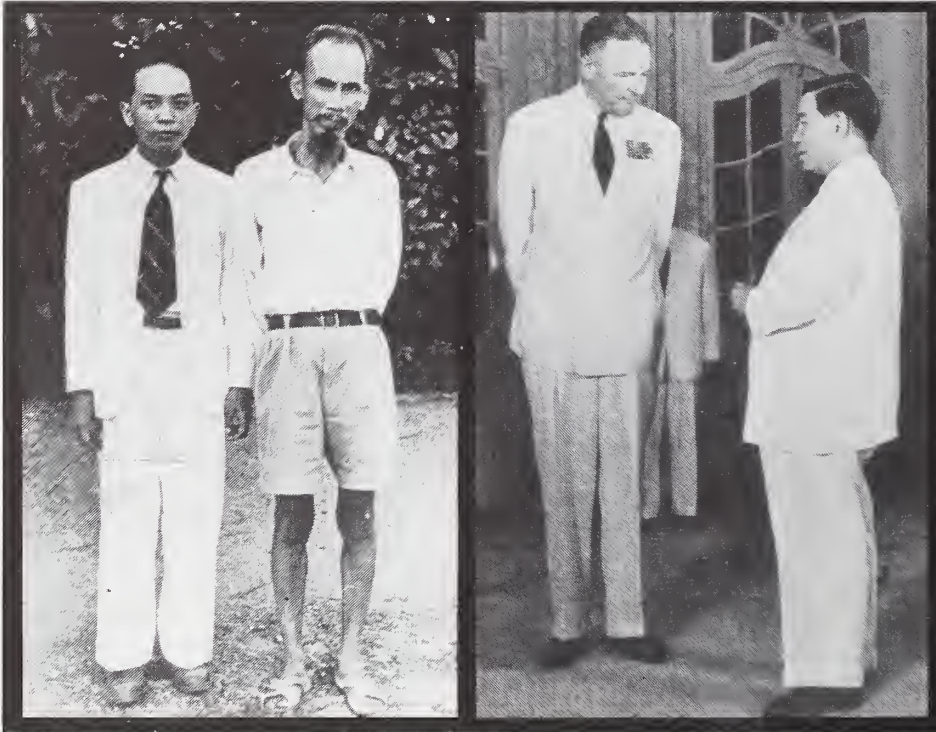




# Bennett Takes AIM

The Right fights public television's "Vietnam" with NEH funds.

SUSAN LINFIELD



The man who has repeatedly promised to depoliticize the National Endowment for the Humanities has singlehandedly awarded \$30,000 to a professional anti-Communist lobbying group called Accuracy in Media for production of a film correcting alleged "distortions" in the recent Public Broadcasting System series *Vietnam: A Television History*. With this grant, NEH chairman William J. Bennett has exposed—more successfully than his critics ever could—the hollowness of his insistent claims that political partisanship is anathema to NEH projects and besmirches the Endowment's intellectual purity. The money was allocated on an "emergency" basis—that is, at the sole discretion of the chair, and therefore bypassing the normal panel/staff review process. Bennett awarded the maximum amount allowable under federal guidelines for such grants.

Bennett opened the debate over politics and the NEH in April 1982, when he splashed onto the front page of the *New York Times* with his charge that Helena Solberg-Ladd's NEH-funded film *From the Ashes... Nicaragua Today* was "socialist realist propaganda" that should never have received government funds; subsequently he called the film "a piece of junk." Since then, Bennett has criticized a film on Palestinian women, another on environmental issues in the Southwest, and two conferences on the Soviet Union.

## THE REAL THING

Always, however, Bennett insisted that it was not the (supposedly leftist) content of these projects which disturbed him, but simply their hortatory nature: In a July 1983 letter to the

Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, Bennett wrote, "It is... essential to the integrity of the Endowment that the projects it supports... not be transparent exercises in political proselytizing, whether of the right, left or center... Where the product of an NEH grant... serves as an unabashed political tract (of any persuasion), then public funds have been misused, and the Endowment embarrassed." And in a letter to the *New York Times* following the *Nicaragua* controversy, he explained, "Even if such a film were balanced, it still should not receive support from the Endowment, because its content and methods do not fall within the humanities. This has nothing to do with supporting or opposing certain political positions... [but] everything to do with maintaining the intellectual integrity of the Endowment."

In October 1983, the NEH published funding guidelines for media projects which seemed to codify Bennett's previous statements, and which some independent filmmakers feared were directed specifically against them. A section labeled "Ineligible Projects" warned, "The Media Program does not provide support for... projects directed at persuading an audience to [sic] a particular political, philosophical, religious or ideological point of view or which advocate a particular program of social action or change, [or] projects examining issues of current controversy without the balance of competing perspectives." But according to NEH program officer Donald Gibson, the Endowment has always prohibited political partisanship. Indeed, the NEH's 1976 guidelines also declared ineligible programs "that advocate... social action or change." Jay Kaplan, executive director of the New York Council for the Humanities, explained, "It's not in the guidelines that you'll find the change. The provisions against advocacy and bias have always been there. It's in the interpretation of the guidelines, and in the shift of program interests [among NEH officers]. There is a concern now with the whole area of 'objectivity' and 'equal time,' and it's almost impossible to deal with highly charged or controversial issues."

## ENTER AIM

Which brings us to AIM. The Washington-based organization was established in 1969 by Reed Irvine, a former economist for the Federal Reserve System. Irvine says he had become "concerned about unfair reporting, in particular by TV coverage of the Democratic National Convention in 1968 and the urban riots. They perpetuated the turmoil instead of trying to cool it." When it became clear that "the industry wasn't interested in policing itself," Irvine says, he founded AIM as a "consumer's group." It now has "almost 40,000" dues-paying members and publishes the semimonthly *AIM Report*, in addition to weekly syndicated columns by Irvine. AIM bills itself as "America's media watchdog," although another view has been voiced by Bill Moyers, a frequent AIM target, who was quoted in *Covert Action Information Bulletin* as saying, "[AIM] is to accuracy in

Above: On the left, General Vo Nguyen Glap (l) commander of the Vietminh revolutionary forces, with Ho Chi Minh, 1945. On the right, US Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge with our man in Saigon, President Ngo Dinh Diem, 1963. Later that year, Diem was overthrown and murdered by his generals with US approval.



media what Cleopatra was to chastity on the Nile."

Other members of AIM's staff include president Murray Baron, whom AIM describes as an "industrial relations consultant" and "a founder of Peace with Freedom in Vietnam"; communications director Bernard Yoh, an "expert in psychological warfare and counterinsurgency" and former "personal adviser" to South Vietnam's late Ngo Dinh Diem; and Charles Wiley, a "veteran journalist" who has been "arrested eight times by KGB and other secret police" and is now executive director of the National Committee for Responsible Patriotism.

Among AIM's targets have been *New York Times* reporter **Raymond Bonner** (in June, 1983 Irvine met with *Times* publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger and charged that Bonner was "worth a division to the communists in Central America"; Bonner was subsequently removed from his Central American beat, and has since left the *Times*); the three major networks (as evidenced by such AIM articles as "CBS Aids America's Enemies," "NBC Trashes J. Edgar Hoover," and "ABC News Runs Amok"); Pulitzer Prize-winner **Seymour Hersh**, who broke the My Lai massacre story ("[He] seem[s] to keep stumbling onto stories... which undermine confidence in the United States," AIM complained); **Walter Cronkite** ("Any journalist stationed in the Soviet Union for any lengthy period of time that came away without feeling and expressing strong revulsion for the communist totalitarian system must be suspected of having been

recruited," Irvine told CBS president Thomas Wyman, referring to Cronkite's stint as UPI's Moscow correspondent in 1946-48); and **Phil Donahue** ("Recent polls have indicated that American women tend to be more liberal than men. One possible explanation for this is the popularity among women of the *Phil Donahue Show*..."). In fact, the concept of the press itself seems to enrage AIM; it currently sells a one-dollar bumper sticker reading, "GRENADA—MEDIA DEFEAT."

### PROPAGANDA AND HOPE

Not surprisingly, AIM has also been highly critical of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS (which it has called "The Propaganda Broadcasting Service"). In a May, 1982 article in the now-defunct *The Rising Tide* ("Devoted to the Rising Tide of Freedom"), Irvine praised Bennett's attack on *Nicaragua*, charging that CPB (which contributed money to the film) should not "use our tax money to fund Sandinista propaganda." The article added, "NEH is calling a halt to funding Marxist propaganda, thanks to Mr. Bennett," and was accompanied by an illustration of a TV screen with a hammer-and-sickle superimposed over the words "PBS." (AIM had previously accused PBS of glorifying North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung.) That same month, the *Washington Inquirer*—a paper which shares office space with AIM and is published by the Council for the Defense of Freedom, on whose board Irvine

sits—proclaimed, "On the vast ocean of darkness that is the federal bureaucracy, William J. Bennett shines brightly as a small beacon of hope." AIM also published "How Radical Filmmakers Get Your Tax Dollars" in the conservative weekly *Human Events* (which had previously published an attack on Bennett's Carter-appointed predecessor, Joseph Duffey). It concluded that the *Nicaragua* controversy "demonstrates how important it is for the Administration to institute a thorough housecleaning at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The Administration and its supporters must act fast in making sure that the open slots on the CPB board of directors are filled by Reaganite conservatives."

AIM has made no secret of its views on the *Vietnam* series. The January, 1984 issue of *AIM Report* approvingly quoted a *Wall Street Journal* charge that the series was "straight Vietnamese Communist Party-line history." The show, AIM continued, "perpetuates the misinformation and distortions that were spread by the media during the Vietnam War which contributed to the... resulting disaster [North Vietnamese victory]... This was the first war fought by the United States in which propaganda, disinformation and incompetent and irresponsible journalism proved to be more decisive than guns." Among those singled out were David Halberstam of the *New York Times*, Malcolm Browne of AP and Neil Sheehan on UPI. (Halberstam, Browne, and Sheehan won the first Louis M. Lyons Award from the Nieman Fel-



Two faces of the war: Left: Mary Martin and the *Hello Dolly* troupe arrive in Saigon, 1965. Right: Viet Cong prisoners of war.



lows at Harvard University for their Vietnam reporting.) The *Report* further accused American journalists of "transforming the Tet victory into defeat" and compared the PBS series to "a history of Nazism [which doesn't] let our knowledge of the gas chambers color our judgment." AIM is also organizing a conference in Washington, DC called "Vietnam: The Real Story" to "discuss and rebut the PBS series."

#### HO AND DIEM

AIM is particularly upset about *Vietnam's* portrayal of North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh and Ngo Dinh Diem, president of South Vietnam from 1954-63. "The treatment of these two men was absolutely wrong and has to be corrected," Irvine said. He called Ho Chi Minh "a Comintern agent" and Diem "absolutely incorruptible and highly respected." *AIM Report* characterizes Ho as "never anything but a fanatical Communist who undermined and betrayed the true Vietnamese nationalists" and lauds Diem for "miraculously succeed[ing] in welding South Vietnam into a viable independent nation."

In formulating these "critiques," AIM is of course serving up some interesting history of its own. Thus, in attacking Ho Chi Minh it finds itself in the surely anomalous position of defending his "rival... the Trotskyite Ta Thu Thau." And Diem's "miracle" regime was such a peculiar mixture of venality and ineptitude that, as the *Washington Post* reported in September, 1963, it simultaneously alienated large numbers of students, intellectuals, nationalists, Buddhists, bureaucrats, and army officers. "One of the most shocking conclusions one is forced to draw about the Diem administration is that it has lost the active support of many of its own members," the *Post* reported, adding that the country was in a "crisis... [which] verges on explosion." Two months later, South Vietnamese generals, with the approval of the US, overthrew and murdered Diem and his equally hated brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu.

The January, 1984 issue of *AIM Report* urged readers to write Bennett demanding a "full scale critique of this badly flawed" series—a suggestion many evidently took to heart. The NEH received approximately 300 letters criticizing the program—"10 to 20 times more than we've ever received for anything else," assistant chairman John Agresto said, adding that "many were obviously the result of the [AIM] article." Bennett says that these letters, in addition to various critical articles (including the one in the *Wall Street Journal* and another in the Organization of American Historians' newsletter) "raised a number of questions about the series and its accuracy. So when we got a request from AIM [to evaluate the series], we thought it highly reasonable." Bennett says the gist of AIM's proposal was to "review and assess the [series'] factual and interpretive accuracy" and reveal its "biases." He says he "doesn't recall" whether AIM submitted a copy of its January *Report* along with its proposal.

(continued on page 23)

## Bringing It All Back Home

The political implications of the AIM grant go way beyond the funding proclivities of the NEH. In the Age of Reagan, it's not simply that the center cannot hold, but that it has, alas, disappeared. The country is moving so far to the right that Barry Goldwater is now considered a moderate, the "liberal" *New York Times* incessantly reports on unproven Soviet plots to kill the Pope and poison the atmosphere, and our Ambassador to the United Nations drones on about the necessity of defending fascist states.

Ten years ago, a group like AIM would have been relegated to what was generally referred to as the "lunatic fringe," nestled somewhere between those who thought that water fluoridation was a Communist plot and those who insisted that Martin Luther King had received fat monthly paychecks from the KGB. Now, however, AIM is anointed with the task of providing a "scholarly, balanced" critique of the *Vietnam* series, in the words of the NEH—and being encouraged to do it quickly, no less.

In this context, it's important to remember just what *Vietnam* did and didn't say. The series was probably the first instance in which Vietnamese people were depicted on US television as both human and rational, instead of as faceless, fanatical "Viet Cong" warriors or wily, deceitful negotiators in Paris. This was a major accomplishment of the series.

In no way, however, did *Vietnam* offer what can be construed as a "radical" interpretation of the Vietnam War—that is, a depiction of our Southeast Asian experience not as a "tragic mistake" but as one in a long and bloody series of American interventions into such countries as Greece, Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Korea,

Grenada, and, most recently, El Salvador and Nicaragua. (Those wishing to delve further back in time can try the Russian Civil War or the Spanish-American War.) The word for such depressingly frequent but certainly not mistaken interventions is imperialism.

The controversy over *Vietnam* is indicative of the revisionist school of Vietnamese history which is gaining currency. The revisionists—in whose camp Reed Irvine and AIM can safely be placed—specialize in the "if only" theory of history: that is, the US could have won in Vietnam if only we had dropped more bombs or sent more troops; if only the press had been more sympathetic, the demonstrations a little smaller, the body counts a bit more accurate; if only Ho Chi Minh had died a little sooner or later, or Kissinger had been more or less tough. But no history is revisionist enough to disguise the fact that after years of propping up and tearing down governments, coups and assassinations, burning villages and dropping Agent Orange, supporting orphanages and building torture centers, land redistribution, pacification, troop buildups and wearying negotiations, the US achieved none of its aims in Vietnam.

Like pop psychologists who promise their patients a painless road to self-discovery, the Vietnam revisionists assure us that we can study the war without squirming in discomfort or turning away in shame. And like butchers lulling sheep before the axe falls, these "historians" prepare us for the next bloody failure by convincing us the last one was—or *could* have been—a proud success. This, finally, is what the *Vietnam* furor is about.

—SL



Things fall apart: US troops battle the North Vietnamese during the 1968 Tet offensive, a political disaster for the US. AIM views Tet as a victory for the US which disloyal American journalists transformed into a defeat.

Robert Ellison, Black Star



# Media as Property: The Rights Stuff

Copyrights, options, archives, releases

PAULA R. SCHAAP

*Author's note: This article is presented only for the purposes of educating the independent filmmaker in some basic legal principles. It is not to be taken as legal advice. Every financing situation is different, the law constantly changes, and the laws in each state can vary widely. The independent filmmaker should, therefore, always consult his or her attorney before undertaking any course that may have legal ramifications.*

Rights questions for independent filmmakers? Yes—but not the same rights questions that our old friend, independent film producer Wheeler Dealer, had when the police wouldn't let him call his lawyer during that unfortunate incident in his misguided youth. This article will address those rights questions that arise when the independent filmmaker has his hands on a hot screenplay, or needs film footage from the roaring twenties, or wants to interview a Civil War veteran—that is, acquiring rights to a fiction property, such as a novel or screenplay; acquiring archival footage; and releases.

As a novice independent producer, what should Wheeler be looking for in a fiction property? Dean Goodhill, a Los Angeles independent who produced and directed *Vera*, a short narrative film that has been honored at a number of international film festivals, noted, "Films break down into two categories: those that are character-based, and those that are high-concept in that they don't depend on development of character. When the description of a property starts with 'It's about a guy who . . .', you're usually dealing with a character-based property." In such a case, if the independent producer brings his property to a studio for a possible distribution deal, the studio will usually want to see a star in the main role. Stars cost money, and for that reason, Goodhill suggests that an independent producer's low-budget film be a genre film that can be aimed at a teen-age audience. "The ideal situation is to produce a film like *Mean Streets*," Goodhill added. "But people forget that Scorsese had already completed *Boxcar Bertha*, which was his genre film."

In most circumstances, a producer's first task is to perform a copyright search on the work he has acquired. The search is done through the United States Copyright Office in Washington, DC, or through an agency that handles rights clearances. The agency should investigate whether there are any outstanding options or assignments on the property, which may not appear in a normal copyright search. If the proper-



Director Julie Thompson worked closely with the estate of late Congressman Allard K. Lowenstein (pictured here) to produce her documentary *Citizen*.

ty is acquired through a reputable agent or publisher, their word can usually be relied on regarding copyright ownership.

If a work is not registered with the Copyright Office, it is not necessarily in the public domain. An author can simply affix a copyright symbol, a year, and his name to his work to copyright it. In this case, it may be more difficult to ascertain whether there are any outstanding claims to the work. If the producer picks up an option on such a work, however, he will require the author or the owner of the copyright to warrant that the work is free of any claims.

## ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

The type of property that an independent producer will be able to acquire is governed, in large part, by economics. Most small independents, for example, do not have access to published novels because the asking price is too high. If a novel is available at a low price, the filmmaker should ask himself whether he will be able to turn a novel that didn't make money into a movie that will.

There are reasons, however, why even a popular author may be willing to sell the rights to his book for something less than the market price. Richard Rubinstein, president and chief executive officer of George Romero's production company Laurel Entertainment, says that there is sometimes an inverse ratio between price and a producer's credibility. Recently, Laurel Enter-

tainment made a deal with Stephen King for the rights to his hotly contested novel *Pet Sematary* where the "amount paid up front was substantially less than the going rate." Laurel, however, was able to offer King other inducements. King will write the screenplay, and is also a partner in the movie, which means that he will make more money on the back end than is customary. And King's screenplay will be interpreted by George Romero, a director whom he has enjoyed working with in the past.

Wheeler has either done the appropriate copyright search on an existent novel or screenplay, or he will commission a screenplay based on an idea he dreamt up one night while chewing the fat with his old film school compatriots. ("There's this lonely kid, see, and one night he discovers this creature from outer space. . .") The next thing Wheeler needs is an option agreement with the writer or owner of the copyright.

## OPTION AGREEMENTS

The option agreement grants the producer an exclusive right to buy rights to a property within a specified period of time. At the end of the option period, the producer must buy the rights to the work, or they will revert to the author or copyright owner. The length of the option period, like the price of the option, is negotiable. Obviously, if the writer thinks that his property is highly saleable, he will be less willing to tie it up for a substantial period.



The producer, on the other hand, wants a longer time period, which he can spend raising money to buy the property or for further development costs. Option periods typically run from six months to two years. According to Richard Rubinstein, a producer negotiating for an option should remember that the owner of the rights is asking himself first, will this producer be in a position to exercise his option, and second, will the film be made?

Option agreements usually give the producer an automatic right to extend the option. Further

fits participation for the writer. This may allow the producer to acquire a more commercial property, or the services of a more experienced screenwriter, with less money up front. Net profits should be defined and included in, or attached to, the literary property agreement. It is important to remember, however, that if a deal is made with a distributor, the distributor will have its own definition of net profits. The distributor's definition probably will affect any net profits definitions which the independent producer has already negotiated.

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*If a novel is available at a low price, the filmmaker should ask whether a novel that didn't make money can be turned into a movie that will.*

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payments are made when the option is extended. Another critical clause, from the producer's viewpoint, is the producer's right to engage in pre-production activities, such as preparation of screenplays, revisions, preliminary casting, and fundraising. Additionally, the author or copyright owner gives the producer a warranty guaranteeing that he is the rightful owner of the copyright and that there are no outstanding claims against the work. Finally, the producer should have the right to assign his option.

A writer preparing a screenplay based on a treatment or idea might agree to a two-tiered option contract. Laurel Entertainment often uses such contracts. Essentially, the contract first commissions the writer to prepare a screenplay. Then, once Laurel Entertainment approves the screenplay, it is automatically optioned.

Sums paid for the option or any extension of the option are generally applicable to the final price of the work. The rubric in the industry is that the price of a screenplay should be 10% of the overall film budget. As Rubinstein pointed out, however, 10% is simply an average, and it is not unusual to see screenplays sold for substantially under or over that amount.

#### LITERARY PROPERTY AGREEMENTS

It is customary for the producer and the owner of the property to sign a literary property agreement when the option agreement is signed. The option agreement will state that when the producer exercises his option, the literary property agreement automatically takes effect.

The literary property agreement grants the producers all rights to the property except those reserved to the author, which traditionally include publishing rights and live stage rights. But an author may negotiate for other rights; for instance, a screenwriter may want to write the novelization of his film. Usually, the rights acquired include the right to make the motion picture, shown in any media, including television; remake and sequel rights; advertising rights; music rights, including the rights to the soundtrack album; merchandising tie-ins; and use of the title of the work. The writer often receives additional compensation for sequels, remakes, television series, mini-series, and so forth.

Another form of compensation which may be useful to the independent producer is a net pro-

Credit is always a critical issue for the author of a work. If the author is also the screenwriter, he will usually want to protect his sole writing credit. The producer, however, should retain the right to bring other writers in at a later date if he is dissatisfied with the original writer's work, or if another party, such as a studio, requires it. A literary property agreement with the writer should therefore contain provisions for the original screenwriter to share his credit. Disputes concerning screen credit are submitted to the Writer's Guild of America for arbitration.

Wheeler is now clutching his screenplay and happily fantasizing about directing Brooke Shields' sex scenes. But let's turn to a different Wheeler—the Wheeler who is producing a documentary comprised of archival footage, or the Wheeler producing a narrative film which requires archival footage for background or period touches.

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

According to Mary Lance, a film researcher and consultant to films and television, archival footage breaks down into two categories: free footage, and footage that must be paid for. Much of the free footage is in the public domain and can be found in the National Archives in Washington. Lance is quick to point out, however, that if a private film library owns public domain footage, the producer will still have to pay for it.

The most critical aspect of acquiring archival footage is thorough research. Lance Bird, whose documentary *No Place to Hide* detailed the effects of atomic war, divides his footage between the percentage he can obtain from the National Archives or other free sources, and the percentage he will have to pay for. This strategy not only helps him budget his film accurately, but also helps him negotiate the price of footage from private film libraries.

A filmmaker can do his own research in the National Archives, or he can hire a professional researcher. The National Archives contains not only films produced by the United States government, which are almost all in the public domain, but also extensive newsreel libraries from private sources. Universal, for example, donated its newsreel library to the National Archives.

In the past, the National Archives often took months to fill a request for film footage. But filmmaker Pierce Rafferty (*The Atomic Cafe*) says this situation has recently improved. Now the National Archives is processing orders within a few weeks.

#### ARMY RICHES

Another potentially valuable source for footage is the US military. Rafferty noted that military films were recently consolidated at Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino, California. "You have to write a letter explaining your project, and they reserve the right to okay it," Rafferty added that, in general, "The military should not impede your getting the footage you want. Filmmakers shouldn't be paranoid about approaching the military." The Great American Stock Company, located in San Bernardino, can be hired to do research in the military archives and to expedite requests.

It is critical for the independent filmmaker to know approximately how much footage he will require from private film libraries before approaching them because he may be able to obtain discounts, depending on the amount of footage he will use. Bernard Chertok, president of Sherman Grinberg Film Libraries, Inc., the largest film library in the world, said, "If we are quoting someone a price per minute and they are willing to guarantee us 10 minutes, then we may give them a discount." The rates for footage from private film libraries sometimes depend on the license that the filmmaker is buying. For example, a license for use of footage for a non-theatrical showing may cost less than the license for a theatrical or cable showing. In the case of Sherman Grinberg, the commercial nature of the project does not affect rates. "We don't get involved in trying to assess the relative commerciality of a project," Chertok said, "although we do charge different rates for commercials." In acquiring footage from private film libraries, a filmmaker must also pay the cost of film reproduction.

It is most difficult to acquire footage from commercial studio films, so Wheeler had better think twice about that scene where his protagonist watches *Casablanca* on television. Mary Lance said that, in her experience, permission to use such footage is handled on a case-by-case basis. If it is too difficult for the studio to acquire releases for the film clip, or if provisions in actors' contracts call for union step-up payments, the studio may not grant its permission.

There are still other sources for archival footage—such as Wheeler's Uncle Benjamin who, during World War II, drove his battalion commander crazy with his obsession for home movies. Lance Bird suggests, however, that when dealing with footage owned by private persons, the filmmaker should secure a release to use the footage. In addition, Bird always duplicates privately donated footage, because "even though they may not want you to pay for it, the film has value to the person who owns it."

#### RELEASES

If Wheeler is considering live interviews for a documentary, the operative word is "releases."



Bird considers releases to be so important that he assigns someone on his productions the full-time job of acquiring them. As an example of what can happen if a release is not secured, he mentioned a documentary about the Grand Prix at Watkins Glen. A key sequence in the film was an interview with a man who witnessed a fatal crash during the race. Because the filmmakers failed to get a release, they had to blow up a frame from the film and run the photograph in racing car magazines around the country, hoping to locate the subject of the interview. "If you are loose about getting releases," Bird said, "you can spend a fortune getting them later."

Technically, releases are not necessary if your subject is "newsworthy." By statute in most states, however, a person has a right to privacy. The question of whether a filmmaker has invaded that right can be, and has been, the subject of lawsuits, so the prudent filmmaker will obtain a release under all circumstances.

For instance, in the case of *Citizen—The Political Life of Allard K. Lowenstein*, director Julie Thompson did not need releases from the estate of the late congressman for those portions of the film that were comprised of already available footage. Nevertheless, Thompson maintained a close working relationship with Lowenstein's estate. And for interviews with friends and colleagues of Lowenstein, Thompson obtained the standard releases.

Releases are also important when a film is a *dramatization* of a real person's life. In those cases, releases are usually negotiated with the person whose life is being portrayed. If there has been a published account of the person's life, such as a newspaper article, it is also customary to obtain a release from the writer of the article. Generally, the filmmaker is expected to pay, sometimes handsomely, for the rights to a person's life.

If a film is critical of the person it is depicting, releases will not, obviously, be readily forthcoming. In that case, the filmmaker should be scrupulously accurate in order to avoid a valid claim for libel. And, unless there is documented public evidence, the filmmaker should probably avoid details about his subject's personal life, particularly if the subject is not a "public figure." The law is more protective of the privacy of people who do not choose to place themselves in the limelight.

Whether his film is friendly or critical, a producer who plans to make a film based on a person's life should always consult a lawyer. Right-to-privacy and libel laws are complicated, and change rapidly.

While working on his script for *Surfin' Blood Beach*, Wheeler is also buying archival footage for his documentary, *Eskimos of the South Bronx*. Ambitious boy, our Wheeler. Hopefully, he has done his homework, and can ride off—properties in hand—into the sunset. Theme music up and out. ■

#### NEXT MONTH: MUSIC RIGHTS

Paula R. Schaap is a writer and entertainment lawyer.

SEPTEMBER 1984

## NEH and AIM

(continued from page 20)

When asked whether such a group might contravene his own warning against using NEH funds as "a pretext for partisan, political tendentiousness," Bennett replied: "We don't evaluate the group, we evaluate the grant. The Organization of American Historians is made up mainly of liberals, but we give money to them. We separate out [the group and its proposal]. If we didn't give money to groups with political views, we'd be out of business very soon." He added, "We give thousands of dollars to self-professed liberals without anyone saying a word. We're getting this reaction, first, because AIM is a conservative organization—and that's simply not allowed. And second, this is a grant to investigate the media itself—and that's a very sore spot. It's OK to criticize business, or the military, but not the media."

According to Agresto, AIM applied to the NEH twice for its film grant. In February, it submitted a proposal to the Media Division, which would have been subjected to panel/staff review procedures. Agresto says that the NEH warned AIM that this process would take several months, at which point AIM withdrew its proposal and, in April, resubmitted it as an "emergency" grant, thus requiring only the chairman's approval. "AIM needed to move very fast on this project," Agresto explained. The group was awarded its grant on May 10, and Irvine says AIM plans to produce a two-hour film which it hopes will be shown on PBS. He is requesting contributions from AIM members and foundations to raise the rest of the film's projected \$200,000 budget.

This is the first time the NEH has funded a film project whose stated purpose is to critique another NEH-funded film. "It's highly appropriate," Bennett said. "A large amount of money [\$1.2 million] was put into *Vietnam* [by the NEH], which was seen by a large number of people and created controversy. I'd be prepared to do it [the AIM grant] again." (However, Bennett previously vetoed a \$40,000 grant to produce a viewers' guide to *Vietnam* which included "an interpretive essay drawing analogies to current events in Central America.")

Agresto says the AIM grant should not be interpreted as a criticism of the PBS show *per se*, but signifies only that "enough questions have been raised so that we ought to put a little more money into this. We have an obligation to air all sides of this controversy." He added that the NEH "insisted" that AIM interview the PBS show's producers as a condition for receiving its money. "They must be invited to speak and explain," he said.

The NEH's claim that it is striving to "air all sides" of the Vietnam issue should be tested. Perhaps a leftist think-tank—such as the Institute for Policy Studies or the Southeast Asian Resource Center—will submit a proposal to William Bennett for an emergency grant to critique the *Vietnam* series from a Marxist perspective. Let's see if, like AIM, they receive \$30,000 within a month. ■



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As summer '84 draws to a close, we're pleased to report more independent production by AIVF members than ever, and we look forward to a busy fall season. Thankfully, Queens College work-study intern Carol Anastasia saved the day with her enthusiastic contributions to this column, allowing us to cover an increased number of subjects.

### FLIGHTS OF FANCY

Animator Luisa Felix of Hoboken, New Jersey has completed an impressive body of short cartoon works that would make Max Fleischer proud. In films such as *Jolly Pup*, *Halloween Scream*, and *Frenzy and Mellow*, Felix introduces over 40 original characters she has been inventing since 1966, including cantankerous Adora Duck, wily Le Ratt, feline hep cats Frenzy and Mellow, and the animator's personal favorite, Jolly Pup. Drawing on the larger-than-life personalities of old Hollywood stars and antic animal characters of an earlier golden age of animation, Felix's works pay homage to the classic cartoons of the 1930s. "Animators are very jealous," says Felix. "Whenever we see a popular character, we say 'what can I do to improve on that?'" Though well aware that independent animators are "sadly ignored by the industry," Felix, a School of Visual Arts graduate, keeps her career going by working at an office job while she continues to draw and write. Thousands of drawings on acetate cels go into each three-minute film, but, according to Felix, "It's putting it all together that takes up most of the time."

Marking the directorial debut of Toronto filmmaker Maureen Judge is Makin' Movies Company's half-hour comedy, *Family Business*. Produced by Martin Waxman and co-written by Judge and Waxman, *Family Business* is the story of Sara, "forced to live behind a wall of empty animal cages" and

dominated by her heartless pet-store owner brother. Never fear. Sara makes the break from bestial vassalage with the aid of three female owners of the Vegetable Club, "a bureaucratic soup kitchen," and it's out of the bunny hutch into the potato bin.

*Family Business* was filmed in 16mm color by Maurizio Bello with equipment supplied by the Ontario division of the National Film Board of Canada. Grants from the Canada Council for the Arts's Exploration Program and the Ontario Arts Council made the project possible, and it was aired on Canadian Broadcast Corporation's "Canadian Reflections" series on July 17. The film stars Donna LaPointe and Peter Birkenhead as sibling rivals.

Producer/director Tom Davenport's award-winning seven-film series *From the Brothers Grimm* began a three-year run on PBS this spring. The series, which has adapted several of Grimms's fairy tales to different periods in American history, includes a *Goose Girl* set in the 1600s and a 1930s version of *Jack and the Dentist's Daughter*. Davenport had already completed three of the films when he received a \$300,000 grant from PBS's Instructional Television Division and the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation. *From the Brothers Grimm* was shot entirely on location in Davenport's native Dellaplane, Virginia and the surrounding area, utilizing local actors and crew. It can be seen during PBS instructional TV hours, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

### DOCUMENTARY BEAT

New AIVF member Sheila Kelly Ginsberg premiered her first documentary film, *From Omaha to Everest*, at New York's Asia Society on June 27. The abundance of wine and food was a contrast to the spartan on-screen saga filmed by Ginsberg and crew members Hans Tobeason and Kurt Teske while accompanying nine Americans on a 29-day trek through the frozen Himalayas in Nepal. The 30-minute color documentary is the pilot for a series dealing with the booming new business of adventure travel. It seems that there are people for whom everyday material existence has become too easy, and, Ginsberg notes, "A growing number of people want to test themselves against an environment in which there are none of the comforts of home." Hence, the latest is working vacations. On this trip the hikers included a chemist, a housewife, and a corporate executive who risked fatigue, sickness, dysentery, and headaches to walk one of the most difficult trails attempted by novice climbers. Luckily, this is the deluxe hike with three seasoned Nepalese Sherpas for every tenderfoot, and a number of pack yaks.

Ginsberg, an experienced hiker, and her



Courtesy filmmakers

Mindy Rodman and Paul White's documentary on women and tranquilizers took a bow at the Squat Theater.

crew wrestled with frozen cameras and the caprices of equipment in high altitudes as well as suspicious government officials in Katmandu, who at one point threatened to impound the exposed film and \$150,000 worth of equipment. But the spectacular footage of the Himalayas, plus a beautiful original score by Paul Moravec and narration by George Plimpton, make *From Omaha to Everest* its own triumph over the elements. Ginsberg is currently working on two other documentary projects in addition to the travel series.

Brooklyn producers Mindy Rodman and Paul White of Cinemanic held a special screening of their new educational film, *Daily As Needed*, at New York's Squat Theatre in June. The 15-minute black and white film is intended as a discussion opener on the subject of tranquilizer abuse among women. Departing from the traditional educational documentary mode, *Daily As Needed* depicts a day in the life of one woman who is juggling the full-time occupations of secretary, wife, mother, and dutiful daughter. A voice-over montage of well-intentioned advice from physician, family, co-workers, and friends, added to images of the woman in constant activity from first waking moment until she falls into a tranquilized sleep at night, combine in an effective evocation of the pressures under which many women live. Advertising and store window displays of the beautiful, efficient "superwoman" are juxtaposed against the actual situation of the film's central character.

Rodman notes that chronic depression is today's number one health problem for women. *Daily As Needed* was made in response to the mental health labeling and sexism involved in the easy pill-pop solution offered to women by many in the medical and psychiatric fields. The film was sponsored by the Film Fund and produced with monies from the Brooklyn Arts and Cultural Association, the Astrea Foundation, and private sources. Rodman, also an educational film distributor, is handling the film's distribution.

A growing number of documentaries are focusing on changing tides in industrial America and their effects on the American



Luisa Felix

Let them eat franks: Luisa Felix works an office grind during days, then draws at home on nights and weekends.



laborer and labor unions. Chicago-based Kartemquin Films's latest is *Taylor Chain II: The Story of Collective Bargaining*, which will be broadcast on September 2 at 11 p.m. on New York's public TV station, WNET-13. Produced by Jerry Blumenthal and Gordon Quinn, *Taylor Chain II* documents the interaction of enlightened self-interest, economics, and politics at the collective bargaining table as employees and employers attempt to save the Taylor Chain Co. of Hammond, Indiana. Actual negotiating sessions and union caucuses were filmed over an 18-month period, bringing to life the volatile personalities behind the terms "labor" and "management." The 30-minute, 16mm film, sequel to *Taylor Chain I: Story in a Union Local*, was funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, United Steelworkers of America and the Indiana Committee for the Humanities. Kartemquin, which also produced the acclaimed labor documentary, *The Last Pullman Car*, is currently in production with *Women's Voices: The Gender Gap Movie*.

Keylight Productions, the New York City team of Lauren Goodsmith, David Roth, and Beth Dembitzer, is in production on a video documentary called *The Prospect of Patterning*, scheduled for completion this fall. The project, which documents alternate methods of therapeutic treatment of brain-damaged children, began with the story of Matthew Peckins, a child in the controversial "patterning" program. The pros and cons of patterning, an intensive at-home regimen of exercises and activities, are discussed with medical professionals, parents, family members, and friends. Taped treatment sessions are intercut with interviews. The filmmakers request that individuals interested in volunteering to work with Matthew Peckins contact volunteer coordinator Linda Stackhouse at (212) 243-2393.

Videomaker Lyn Blumenthal's *Social Studies (Part 1)* takes the popular Cuban soap opera *Horizontes* and weaves it into footage related to the American suspension of the sugar trade in the 1960s, incorporating American soft-core/hard-sell commercial advertising techniques. The 20-minute color tape was made in 1983. *Social Studies (Part 2): The Academy* reconstructs a tape of the 1983 Academy Awards presentations in such a way that the "standard Academy fare of introduction, applause, film clips...and professional banter shifts the banal mise-en-scene into proto-fascist theater." This 17-minute color work was produced in 1983-1984 with funding from the Illinois Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the John T. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation. *Social Studies (Parts 1 and 2)* are both distributed by the Video Data Bank at the Art Institute of Chicago.

SEPTEMBER 1984

## FEATURE CORNER

On a \$40,000 budget and a 30-day shooting schedule, New York City's Andre Degas has created a 94-minute, 16mm feature titled *American Autobahn* with German producer Michael Vontergoltz. This road movie follows Otto, a German-American played by Vontergoltz, as he travels from New York to Oklahoma; along the way he meets Mary, an auto mechanic played by Jan Jalenak, who fixes Otto's car and ends up traveling with him. *American Autobahn* uses local crews and professional and non-professional actors. The film received support from German television, and Vontergoltz has obtained distribution deals throughout Germany.

Currently on location in New York, Montreal, Vermont, and New Hampshire, Walter Ungerer of Dark Horse Films is producing and directing his fourth feature, scheduled for completion in 1986. As yet untitled, the project has been partially funded by the NEA and Ungerer. The film concerns an independent filmmaker, played by Ungerer, who acquaints himself with people in various locations intending to use them in his next film, but his potential actors become suspicious of the filmmaker's motives. The film is being shot by cinematographer Jennifer Hart, with sound by Michael Thomas.

Northern California filmmaker Nina Menkes is currently working on a film entitled *Woman at Point Zero*, the story of "a beautiful young woman's exploration of her decaying sexuality." Pre-production began in 1982 and initial photography has been completed in Egypt and the Sudan. The 90-minute color film bears the same title as a novel by Egyptian feminist Nawal El Saadaw. Menkes received the \$5,000 Lynn Weston Award while a graduate student at the University of California at Los Angeles, which was matched by private donors, allow-

ing her to begin her project. She is searching for completion funds in the US and the Middle East.

## ON THE CIRCUIT

*The Work I've Done*, Ken Fink's new hour-long documentary on the retirement of blue collar workers, will air nationally Sept. 9 on most PBS stations at 10 p.m. and on New York City's WNET-13 on Sept. 12 at 10 p.m. The film was previously seen at the American Film Festival, where it won the Red Ribbon, and at Filmex. Elsewhere, David Sutherland's *Paul Cadmus: Enfant Terrible at 80* has garnered an American Film Fest Blue Ribbon, a Cine Golden Eagle, the Houston Silver Venus, an Athens International Festival special merit award, and a showing at Melbourne. *New Voices*, produced by Arlen Slobodow of Public Interest Video Network, also won an AFF Blue Ribbon this year, as did Michelle Parkerson's *Gotta Make This Journey*.

Jill Godmilow's docudrama, *Far From Poland* [see "Far From Poland: Made in USA," *The Independent*, October 1983], opens Oct. 3 for a two-week run at New York's Film Forum 1. Prior to that, it will be seen on the West Coast at the American Film Institute's International Video Festival, Sept. 20-23, and at the Edinburgh Festival, Aug. 19-Sept. 8. The work combines film and video, and has been three years in the making.

New York-based distributor Independent Cinema Artists and Producers and producer Sol Rubin have leased telecast rights for Rubin's *Saints in Chinatown* and *Trinidad in Brooklyn* to RAI, Italy's national network. And congratulations to upstate New York independent producer Carol Clement of Artemesia for netting the 1984 I Love New York Outstanding Achievement Award for Excellence in Advertising for *The Best Show This Fall*, a 30-second TV spot co-produced with Enrico Scull of Hudson River Graphics. ■



Harlequin-suited Tinka Menkes on the Nile in Nina Menkes' story of a woman's exploration of her decaying sexuality.



## FESTIVALS

# Florentine Documentary Renaissance

The 25th documentary Festival dei Popoli in Florence, scheduled for Nov. 30-Dec. 8, 1984, provides an opportunity for films to be seen by a broad audience, although TV and distribution deals are not likely. Jim Klein who, with Julia Reichert, attended the festival with their *Union Maids* in 1977 and whose *Seeing Red* was chosen as outstanding film last year, recalls good attendance at the screenings and good follow-up discussions. According to Klein, "You get more of a cross-section of the population—more working class." This speaks well for the kind of promotion and publicity generated by the festival organizers, Thomas Shandorf and Mario Simondi.

Unfortunately, one strange occurrence should serve as a *caveat*. Last year, Klein and Reichert were not informed that *Seeing Red* was in competition, although they were aware that it was being screened. "They called us on Thursday and told us if we could get the next plane to Florence they would pay our way to accept an award on Saturday," Klein explained. Neither filmmaker could make the trip and they were unable to convince the festival to bring Aaron Ezekiel, the film's associate producer.

On the plus side, judge Adrienne Mancia, curator of film exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, had high praise for her fellow judges, and hopefully the system employed last year remains intact, even as the jury changes. "The festival helps to provide an atmosphere which leads to profitable discussions," she said. "The jury was knowledgeable about film, very interested in the documentary form, and had high standards. The jury was very much on its own—not influenced by what the administration felt."

But Mancia also noted the absence of buyers, and Klein's long-running experience with Italy has led him to the conclusion that Italy may be the weakest European country for marketing. Apparently, there are not many non-theatrical educational outlets, or cine-clubs, unlike in other European countries. Although *Union Maids* was aired on RAI, Italy's national TV station, it was never picked up by a distributor. According to Klein, the TV situation in Italy is "crazy." His impression was that RAI has thousands of hours of programming that they've bought and never aired, and they might broadcast work they never actually purchased. Klein's advice to filmmakers hoping to strike a distribution deal in Europe is to get a substantial advance in case you never hear from the dis-

tributor again. And, he added, "to get a foreign distribution contract settled, you almost have to go there."

This year's deadline for entry forms for dei Popoli is Oct. 31. Entries must be accompanied by three or more photos and "complete documentation on the film and director," i.e., a one-page summary, the director's bio, and press clippings. You must send the text of the film—English is acceptable. They expect filmmakers to pay shipping costs, with the exception of "invited" producers. This a video (¾") and film (16 or 35mm) festival, although the organizers stipulate that video must have been produced by a TV network. If your work in video has been broadcast, perhaps the station can submit it. Video dubs of films (American or European format) will be considered for selection.

Work not released in Italy is not eligible for competition, but can be included in the Information Section. According to its regulations, the festival seeks documentaries "dealing with sociological, political, economic, anthropological, folkloristic, and ethnographic themes." An international jury awards three Golden Marzoccos as prizes, with the administration reserving the right to purchase a copy for the festival film library which may be used solely for cultural and non-commercial purposes. In the case of *Seeing Red*, Reichert and Klein were in-

formed that their film was chosen for purchase, but after the print was returned, the sale was never mentioned again. In addition to the Information Section and the competition, this year's special section will be "Film and Reality," which "will treat the relationship between fiction and documentary film." Various seminars and conferences are also scheduled to be held throughout the festival. Last year's special section was called "Cinema on Cinema" and featured documentaries on Bergman, Fassbinder, and Tanner, as well as Chaplin's *Behind the Screen* (1916) and *Hollywood Blvd.*

Sixty-seven documentary works from 20 countries were screened last year, and the judges hailed from France, Germany, Italy, and the US. As Mancia explained, their bias was not so much "political" as aesthetic. She added that films are judged on the basis of "text and craftsmanship," with a sensitivity to the "culture the film came out of." Last year's three winners were Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*, the Australian *First Contact*, and Miklos Jansco's film on his native Budapest. Other selections ranged from *Burroughs* to a film on factory life in Munich to another on folk music in New Guinea—implying an eye for diversity on the part of the selection committee. Entry forms should arrive at AIVF in the near future. Send entry forms to Festival dei Popoli, Via Flume 14, 50123 Firenze, Italy; telephone: 055 294353. Telex FESTIVALDEIPOPOLIFIRENZE 570 093-570215. Work should be sent to: Festival dei Popoli, c/o Cipolli & Zanetti, Via Nomentana 257 (Customs House, Rome), 00161, Roma Italy. The deadline is Nov. 10. Telephone: 06 8445020-8445029. TELEX 68140 CIPROME. All films should be sent air freight, and festival personnel say they will return these within 30 days after the event, although foreign entries will only be sent to Customs House, Rome.

—Robert Aaronson

## Black Maria: Edison's Legacy

Once upon a time there was a little boy who loved going for rides in the car to see the moving-picture world whiz by, framed by the back window. Today John Columbus still has the same happy-go-lucky enthusiasm for the kinetic image. He is the founder and director of the Thomas A. Edison Black Maria Film and Video Festival in New Jersey, now entering its fourth year. An independent filmmaker himself, Columbus has created the ideal festival—receptive, fair, and well-organized.

Black Maria policy reflects Columbus' belief that "art, human expression, is too broad to be narrowly defined. Art should not be subjected to constraints." Accordingly, there are no entry categories, nor even a separation of film and video. All works are judged on content and on the filmmaker, videomaker, or computer artist's explanation in a written description of the project. Black Maria looks for works which exhibit "artistic treatment and insight into a subject, dynamic imagery, craftsman-like control, and



Howard Brookner's profile of *Naked Lunch* author William Burroughs was a selection at the Festival dei Popoli.





Thomas Alva Edison's historic Black Maria studio is namesake and inspiration to the New Jersey festival.

respect for the medium, and a sensitivity to the human condition." The festival thus prefers hand-wrought quality to slickness.

Before the selection of prizewinners by a panel of five judges, each work is seen by at least two prescreeners. They select 25 to 30 works for the final competition. Columbus describes this task as "hard and dangerous, a lot of responsibility, and a lot of fun." The number of entries has increased each year to over 240 in 1983. In addition to the prescreened selections, judges are provided with short biographies of all entrants, so they may request screenings of works that have been cut in the preselection process.

This year's roster of prescreeners includes Joyce Jesinowski, one of the first women to receive a Ph.D. in film from Columbia. She served as a judge in 1983 and wrote the festival's first annual monograph. Both Jesinowski and Ray Foery, the former workshop director for the Collective for Living Cinema, and a 1983 prescriber, helped Columbus develop the festival's philosophy back in 1980, and have been involved ever since.

This kind of continuity is one of the festival's major goals. To this end, the panel always includes three people who were involved the previous year; a returning judge, a prescriber turned judge and a festival winner—an effective method for increasing input from the independent community. Paul Glabicki of Pittsburgh, PA is this year's invited filmmaker. His *Film Wipe Film* (30 mins., 16mm) won one of four major prizes last year. It's a semi-abstract animated work of pure moving lines that assemble into recognizable images. Other winners were *Remains To Be Seen* (6½ mins., 16mm) by Jane Aaron, a playfully nostalgic piece that captures the essence of lost moments with a traveling matte technique of animation imposed over live action; *Sprout Wings and Fly* (30 mins., 16mm) by Les Blank, a vital documentary on the life and music of a Blue Ridge Mountain fiddler; and *Poletown Lives!* (57 mins., ¾" videotape) by George Corsetti, Jeanie Wylie,

and Richard Wieske, which discloses the crisis of Poletown, a section of Detroit which was demolished to make room for an automobile plant.

This year's festival judges will again be high caliber. Jon Gartenberg, assistant film curator for the Museum of Modern Art, is the 1984 returning judge; he will be in good company with Karen Cooper of the Film Forum, John Hanhardt, curator of film and video at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and animation expert Charles Samu, Home Box Office's manager of intermissions programming.

Black Maria, the site of the festival, is considered by many scholars to be the world's first motion picture studio. It was built by Thomas Edison in West Orange, New Jersey around the turn of the century at what is now the Edison National Historical Site. The tar-papered, hinged-roof structure was constructed on a railroad-like turntable so it could rotate to follow the sun. The official name was the "Revolving Photographic Building," but Edison's employees dubbed it "Black Maria" after the police paddywagons of the day.

"Independents are related to the Black Maria," says Gartenberg. "They have that same sense of limitless possibilities as works produced when the medium was new. It can be seen in editing styles and patterns, in cutting techniques—indies don't follow Hollywood narrative logic. The connection with the Black Maria gives the festival an important perspective on creative vision and expression."

This year's package of winners and semi-finalists will be shown at various locations throughout New Jersey, including colleges, museums, and media centers. It will also appear at the Philadelphia College of Art and the Collective for Living Cinema in New York. Screening fees, which are expected to total \$3,000, will be paid for all public exhibitions in addition to the \$2,000 in cash prizes. Participants will have an opportunity to screen their works for a fee on New Jersey's Suburban Cablevision. Entries are



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due by October 27, with a \$12 fee (which includes return postage.) For more information, contact: John Columbus, Thomas A. Edison Black Maria Film and Video Festival, c/o Edison Nat'l Historic Site, Main Street and Lakeside Ave., West Orange, NJ 07052; (201) 736-8575; or contact: Ed Pershey, (201) 736-0550. Films and tapes should be sent to: Thomas A. Edison Film and Video Competition, c/o The Essex-Hudson Film Center of the East Orange Public Library, 21 South Arlington Ave., East Orange, NJ 07018.

—Deborah Erickson

## The Importance of Being Oscar

It's like being kept off the playground by the bigger kids—the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences members guard the gates to the Oscars by keeping tight control over nominations for awards. Independents are almost never nominated in the feature categories, but the studio machine can't keep us out as far as shorts and documentaries are concerned. It could be that the Hollywood clique is willing to make a little room for these films because their theatrical market potential is limited.

AIVF member Jimmy Picker (Motionpicker Studios) won the Oscar for Best Animated Short Subject this year. His *Sundae in New York* is four whimsical minutes of stop-motion animation, starring a clay Mayor Ed Koch. Ed (everybody's favorite Frank Perdue look-alike) sings a rousing version of "New York, New York," with funny new lyrics. Picker's *Jimmy the C*, featuring a puppet Jimmy Carter singing "Georgia on My Mind," was nominated in 1978. Picker urges AIVF members to try for an Oscar. "It doesn't matter how long you've been in the business. No one judges on past performance, just the value of any given work. It's easy to qualify by showing at a festival, and there's no entry fee. It's worth a shot." Picker entered *Sundae* at the noncompetitive New York Film Festival, then mailed a print and entry form to the Academy. "It was that simple, and I did not have a distributor at the time." Picker's production tip is: "Keep your project clever but short, and very well-planned. Otherwise, you'll never finish and the theaters won't want it." *Sundae* took about a year to complete and is distributed nontheatrically by Direct Cinema of Los Angeles. Just getting a nomination is impressive, but, according to Picker, "actually winning the Oscar—beating out Walt Disney's *Mickey's Christmas Carol*—sure felt good."

Academy Awards are given in the categories of documentary features (over 30 minutes) and documentary short subjects (under 30 minutes). The film must be in 16, 35, or 70mm and must have participated in a "recognized" festival within two years of its completion date, between Nov. 1, 1983 and Oct. 31, 1984. (From now on, this column will put an "AA" notation after each festival listing that qualifies your film for competition.) In non-competitive festivals, the film must have been accepted for exhibition and screened. In competitive festivals, it must have

won a best-in-category award. Proof of acceptance or honors must be submitted with the print and entry form no later than Oct. 31, 1984. Also eligible is any documentary which has been publicly exhibited within two years of its completion date for paid admissions in a commercial motion picture theater in the Los Angeles area (defined as Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, or Beverly Hills) for a consecutive run of not less than one week between Nov. 1 and Oct. 31, 1984. Eligibility may also be obtained by winning a CINE Golden Eagle.

A further condition of entry for documentaries and short films states: "Except in instances in which the producer is unable to comply herewith, every award shall be conditioned upon the delivery to the Academy of one print of every film nominated for the final balloting for all Academy Awards, and such print shall become the property of the Academy with the proviso, however, that the Academy shall not use such print for commercial gain."

Eligibility requirements for the short film awards, given in animation and live action categories were made more lenient last year and are quite similar to those for documentaries. Short films may be in 16, 35, or 70mm, and no longer than 30 minutes. A film may become eligible by being exhibited within two years of its completion date in a commercial motion picture theater in Los Angeles County for a full theatrical release (no less than two screenings per day) on three consecutive days between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1984. A film will not be disqualified if it has had prior exhibition outside Los Angeles County after Jan. 1, 1983, provided such exhibition first occurred in a commercial motion picture theater. The short may also have participated in a "recognized" film festival within two years of its completion date, between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1984. In competitive festivals, the film must have won a best-in-category award, and in non-competitive festivals it must have been accepted for exhibition and screened. As with the documentaries, proof of acceptance of honors must be submitted with the print, but the deadline is Dec. 31, 1984, two months later than the documentary deadline. Shorts may now also become eligible by winning a CINE Golden Eagle.

Since bumping a print up to 35mm can be quite expensive, many producers prefer taking the qualifying festival option. This may be a problem if your film is completed after the festival entry deadlines, in which case trying for a commercial run in Los Angeles is the only way into the Oscar playground.

Entry forms and a list of qualifying film festivals may be obtained by contacting the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211; (213) 278-8900.

## ● Qualifying Competitive Film Festivals for Documentaries:

*Feature-Length:* American, Berlin Int'l, Cannes Int'l, Cartagena Int'l, Columbus Int'l, Gijon Int'l Film Festival for Children & Young People, Hemisfilm '84, India Int'l, Karlovy



Vary Int'l, Locarno Int'l, Montreal World, San Francisco, Venice Int'l.

**Short Subjects** (in addition to those listed above): Bilbao Int'l Festival of Documentary & Short Films, Cracow Int'l, Nyon Int'l, Oberhausen Int'l.

● **Qualifying Non-Competitive Film Festivals for Documentaries:**

**Feature-Length:** Brussels Int'l, Cork, Deauville, Hong Kong Int'l, London Int'l, Los Angeles Int'l Film Exposition, Melbourne, New York, San Sebastian Int'l, Sydney, Venice Biennale '84.

**Shorts:** Cork, Hong Kong Int'l, London Int'l, Los Angeles Int'l Film Exposition, Melbourne, New York, Sydney.

—Deborah Erickson

## **Bucks County: Second Time Around**

Although it restricted submissions to films from the mid-Atlantic states last year, the Bucks County Film Festival is now encouraging filmmakers from around the country to send short films for the festival's second year. Organized by Film Five, Inc., a non-profit filmmaking cooperative in Bucks County and a local film society called Closely Watched Films, the festival got off to a bumpy start in its first year. Only about 175 people attended the public screening of nine films, and according to John Toner, one of the festival coordinators, "The quality fell off dramatically after the first third or so of the 28 submissions last year." But Charles Samu, manager

of intermissions programming at Home Box Office and this year's judge for the Bucks County fest, has nothing but high praise for this and other regional festivals. "Smaller festivals are really important. They provide an opportunity for people in the area to see that independent, alternative filmmaking can have something to say to them." As for his criteria for judging the competition (which will award a \$500 first prize and smaller discretionary prizes totaling an additional \$500), Samu says he takes an "open-minded approach. When you make an effort to spot regional films there is the tendency to be condescending. They should be judged using strict standards, but always on their own terms. How well does the film live up to its potential? What is it trying to achieve?" He looks for films that "avoid clichés, that are trying to say something different, that stake out new ground." An experimental film can be judged for "how successful it is in getting you to change your perception."

Last year's five winners divided \$700 in prize money equally. They included Tony Buba's *Voices From a Steel Town*, a 28-minute documentary which Buba describes as "part personal and part social-political. The film traces my growing up in the town paralleled with the town's decline." Buba, who is a \$20,000 grant recipient from the National Endowment for the Arts this year, also screened the 12-minute *Mill Hunk Herald*, a documentary about a radical steelworkers' newspaper in Braddock, PA which takes a dramatic turn when

all the characters and the high school marching band do a grand song-and-dance finale to "Jumpin' Jack Flash." Brady Lewis, who worked on *Voices*, and is a fellow instructor with Buba at Pittsburgh Filmmakers, won for his 7-minute *Frequent Seas*, which he describes as "an experimental film consisting of portraits of people with all the special effects done in the camera." The other winners were George Hornbein and Ken Thigpen from Pennsylvania State University for their documentary *Salamanders: A Night at the Phi Delta House*, Mark Burns for his experimental piece, *The Creation of Television*, and Jay Leighton Pierce, for the experimental film, *Not Much Time*.

Toner explained that the biggest problem last year was "getting the word out." But in 1984 the festival, which Samu describes as "meticulously organized," has an enormously expanded mailing list and plans for a more elaborate program. They hope to make a video reel of the winning films for fundraising purposes, as they did in 1983. The entry fee is \$10, and the filmmaker is responsible for shipping fees. (With successful fundraising, that might change.) But the obvious appeal of the festival is the chance of having your film screened and judged by Charles Samu, as well as the potential cash prize. As Samu said, "As a small festival, it is important that they give money. A lot of festivals seem to be run so that festival directors can have a job. Major festivals can provide exposure—a minor festival cannot hope to attract people from the industry, but they can award prizes." Asked



An event of international importance will bring together — from September 27 to October 4, 1984 — participants from 11 countries to discuss the distribution, and promotion of video art. Recognizing the importance of these different levels of interest the **MONTRÉAL INTERNATIONAL VIDEO CONFERENCES** are presenting 3 interrelated activities:

### **The festival**

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### **The exhibition**

The installations will be realised and displayed by: General Idea, Miguel Raymond, Barbara Steinman, Keigo Yamamoto: Musée d'art contemporain; **Nam June Paik**: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, **Dalibor Martinis**: Galerie Articule, **Dara Birnbaum**, Philippe Poloni: Galerie Graff, **Maurizio Camerani**, **Michel Jaffrenou**, **Mary Lucier**: Galerie Jolliet, **Stuart Marshall**, **Marshallore**: Galerie Optica, **Marie-Jo Lafontaine**, **Muriel Olesen**: Powerhouse Gallery, **Ingo Gunther**, **Gérald Minkoff**, **Servaas**: Galerie de l'université du Québec à Montréal. Plus a very unique event at Gallery Esperanza: some 40 paintings and drawings by **Nam June Paik**

### **The symposium**

At least 21 speakers will discuss the question of video description.

Coordination: Andrée Duchaine, C.P. 430, Station N, Montréal, Qué. H2X 3M3 Canada

Design: Jean Segers



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whether he was scouting for HBO when he judged films for festivals, Samu said, "Always." But have no fear if your film doesn't look like the mainstream fare of cable America—according to Samu he "uses one criterion for the festival and another for the network, because the audiences are vastly different."

The festival accepts 16mm films of under 30 minutes in length. Deadline is Oct. 20. The public screening will be held at a theater in Newton, Pa. For more information and application forms contact: Scott Peterson, Film Five, Inc., Box 7, Wrightstown, PA 18940; (215) 357-1647. Films should be sent to Bucks County Film Festival, c/o Smith and Toner, 8 East Court St., Box 779, Doylestown, PA 18901. —Robert Aaronson

## Brussels: Super-8 Fete

Commerce is practically the last thing that Super-8 filmmakers seem to worry about; instead, respect of peers often takes precedence over other forms of success or financial gain. For artists working in this medium, an event such as the S-8 International Festival in Brussels can provide opportunities for such support as well as what little monetary reward is available to them [see Toni Treadway and Bob Brodsky's "Brussels Sprouts—Tips from Abroad," in the April 1984 *Independent*].

## IN BRIEF

*This month's festivals have been compiled by Robert Aaronson and Deborah Erickson with the help of the FIVE files.*

**Listings do not constitute an endorsement, and since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.**

### Domestic

• **AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR COUNSELING & DEVELOPMENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, April 2-5. Held in conjunction with the annual AACD conference attended by approximately 9,000 professionals in human development fields such as counseling, psychology, rehabilitation, & sociology. Descriptions & sale info on 25-30 semi-finalists will be printed in the official convention program. Four winners will be featured in *Guidepost*, the AACD's newspaper, distributed to 42,000 members; & will receive plaques. 1983's Best Film was the Canadian Broadcast Corporation's Oscar winner *Just Another Missing Kid*; while the Best of Fest went to the Nat'l Heart, Lung & Blood Institute's anti-smoking flick, *We Can't Go On Like This*. \$35 initial entry fee, another \$35 "for projection facilities" if your film/tape is selected. Enter by Oct. 1. Contact: The Convention Dept. of the AACD, 5999 Stevenson Ave., Alexandria VA 22304; (703) 823-9800.

• **FREEDOM FOUNDATION NATIONAL AWARDS**, January 25-30. Awards presented for motion picture & TV programs that "support the US' social, political & economic strength...by saying something good about America, or offering construc-

The city of Brussels goes all out for this festival. Last year, filmmakers from 36 countries attended. No one from the US has been invited yet, but whomever is will probably be asked to complete a selection of films made in this country. In 1983, Toni Treadway and Bob Brodsky from Boston were assigned that role only two weeks prior to the festival, which explains why the screening schedule was somewhat haphazard. Nevertheless, they say the screenings were full. Six judges are chosen to represent an international cross-section of makers, and, subsequently, the winning films tend to be those which "transcend language." Treadway described the most popular films as being "strong not necessarily polished." Any filmmaker who is in Europe should try to attend and bring their films; with a little lobbying you might get them screened. Most films will then travel from Brussels to a S-8 festival in Lisbon. The flexible deadline for Brussels is October 15. This year's special section is US West Coast S-8. Contact: Robert Malengreau, 12 rue P.E. Janson, 1050 Brussels, Belgium; tel. 649-3340. Richard Clark, from the International Federation of Super 8, is willing to provide information about the festival; he can be reached at 9155 St. Hubert, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2M 1Y8; (514) 625-2616. Or call Toni Treadway and Bob Brodsky at (617) 666-3372.

The Brussels festival will take place Nov. 14-18, 1984. **RA**

tive advice." This could include current issues like drug & child abuse, juvenile delinquency, etc. "Nothing negative is eligible." No fee. ¾" & 16mm accepted by Oct. 1. Contact: Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge, Valley Forge PA 19481; (215) 933-8825.

• **INPUT '85**, April 14-20. 8th annual int'l conference sponsored this year by INA, the Institute National de la Communication Audio-Visuel in Marseilles, France. Forum for industry members to exchange programming ideas for "the best innovative public television." Selection committee is looking for "original, unusual, experimental, even controversial programs that break new ground." Entries must be affiliated in some way with public broadcasting—being offered to, and/or rejected by a station is sufficient. Approximately 20 hours of US programs will be selected from about 40 hours entered in competition after pre-screening in this country. The jury consists of shop stewards from public television institutions in participating countries. Deadline: Oct. 5. For forms and info contact: Joyce Campbell, WETA, Box 2626, Washington, DC, 20013; (202) 998-2758.

• **KINETIC IMAGE FILM GROUP INT'L FILM FESTIVAL**, October 13. Ninth annual event in Tampa/St. Petersburg area accepts entries in S-8 and 16mm; drew 64 entries last year. HBO's Lisa Tomlinson will be looking for material here. Works will be broadcast on local cable TV. 1983 first-place Kinny statuette (gold figure, looks like you-guessed-it) went to *Ernie and Rose* by John Huckert. Fifth place winner *Polage* (a doc on artist's use of polarizing filters) was picked up by HBO. Fest is hoping for cash awards this year, depending on funding. Deadline: Oct. 1. Entry fee: \$10 for first film, \$5 for each additional. Contact: Craig Bordleman, Box 11465, St. Petersburg, FL 33733; (813) 577-2086.

• **1984 MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL**, September 17-20. Changing cultures throughout the world is the focus of this year's eighth annual Margaret Mead Film Festival, held at the American



Museum of Natural History in New York City. The festival will screen 40 anthropological documentaries of which 24 will be New York premieres. Each film will be introduced by its director or an expert in the field, and will be followed by a discussion. Included in the selection is *Small Happiness*, by Richard Gordon and Carmelita Hinton, a documentary about the changing role of women in the Chinese village of Long Bow. On the other side of the world is *Hell's Kitchen Chronicle* by Maren and Reed Erskine, which presents the stereotype-shattering "inner life" of New York City community residents. The festival will also exhibit works on the Nuba tribe of the Sudan and a farm family in western Ireland. Taken together, these films are evidence of Mead's belief in film as an essential research and teaching tool for studying culture in the twentieth century.

Malcolm Arth, chairman of the museum's education department, and Florence Stone, the museum's special programs coordinator, are co-chairs of the 1984 festival. Catherine Bateson, Mead's daughter, is the honorary chair. Screenings are from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. in the museum's four theaters, and seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. For information contact: Department of Education, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79 St., New York, NY 10024.

● **US FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, January 21-27, 1985. Held in Park City, Utah, and devoted exclusively to independently produced narrative and documentary features, with an extensive video sidebar event. Last year's narrative winners were *Old Enough* and *Last Night at the Alamo*. The regulations and deadlines were not available at press time, but watch next month's column for more info. We do know that you can contact: Lory Smith, 19 Exchange Place, Salt Lake City, UT 84111, by Oct. 31 for the scoop.

## Foreign

● **BERLIN JUNGFORUM**, February. Non-competitive forum for "young," that is, progressive or avant-garde works, seeks feature-length films in 16mm & 35mm. "Films should encourage a better understanding between nations," and must be sub-titled in German. Director Ulrich Gregor is coming to the Independent Feature Project Market in October to make selections. For more info, contact: Timothy Ney, IFP, 24 W. 86 St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 469-0909.

● **FRIEDBERGER FILMTAGE**, November 26-30. Accepts religious films—from atheist to Chris-

tian—that address the basic questions and problems of human existence. Films should clearly present the maker's outlook on life, and how their belief serves as a guide and inspiration. Silent or sound works in any and all film and video formats. Contact: Friedberger Filmtage, D. Ennulat, Postfach 1303, 6360 Friedberg/Hessen, W. Germany; tel. 06031/5620.

● **INT'L AMATEUR SPORTS-FILM COMPETITION**, November. Held during even-numbered years in Muelheim-Ruhr in southern Germany, a 10-15 minute train ride from the industrial city of Dusseldorf. Fest encourages an interest in moving pictures about sports in the widest sense. Works accepted in S-8, 16 & 35mm & all video formats. Fest literature stresses amateur only. Categories: documentaries, eyewitness accounts, current affairs, short films, cartoons, light entertainment, educational, instructive & scientific. Silent films are accepted. Maximum length 20 mins. All entries screened, filmmaker agrees to non-paid, non-commercial, post-fest distribution to schools, sports clubs, etc. Fest will make a copy of work for this purpose. No entry fee, fest pays return by registered mail. Deadline: Oct. 15. Contact: Wolf Dietrich, Landessportbund Nordrhein-Westfalen E. V., Friedrich-Alfred Str. 25, 4100 Duisburg 1; tel. 0203/72926.

● **INTERNATIONAL CONSUMER FILM COMPETITION**, January, showcases informational & educational works in 16 & 35 mm & U-Matic PAL video. Informational works can deal with general consumer topics, commercial goods, services, food and nutrition, or health subjects. No fee. Deadline: October. Contact: ANK Berlin, Company for Exhibitions, Fairs & Congresses Ltd., Messedamm 22, D 1000, Berlin 19, W. Germany; tel. 030/30381.

● **LEIPZIG INT'L DOCUMENTARY & SHORT FILM FESTIVAL**, November, welcomes progressive documentaries to their premiere Eastern bloc meeting place. Leipzig isn't exactly sunny Havana, but it's an interesting place in its own right, and the fest draws filmmakers, TV buyers, etc. from throughout the world. Last year, *Nicaragua: Report from the Front* (Deborah Shaffer, Tom Sigel, Pam Yates) took the top prize; Robert Richter's *Gods of Metal*, produced for the Maryknolls, also won an award. Films on disarmament, Third World struggles, socialist history usually popular. For more info, send SASE to Jonathan Miller, Icarus Films, 200 Park Ave., So., #1319, NY NY 10003, or call (212) 674-3375. ■

good working order. \$5500. Contact: Annie, (212) 966-7526, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Beaulieu 6008 Pro w/Scheider 6-70 fl. 4 zoom lens. 2 external battery packs w/recharging unit. Tiffen filters, Tamron C-mount adapter. Spectra Pro light meter. All like new. \$1900. Contact: Karyl-Lynn Zietz, Kope Prod., PO Bx 40827, Palisades Station, Washington DC 20016, (202) 686-0898.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony VO-2860 w/infielder. Good condition. \$1800. Contact: Paul Goodberg, Maltese Media, (201) 247-4740, NJ.

● **FOR SALE:** Nagra 4L, case, internal crystal sync, pre-amp for condenser mike, Anvil shipping case, ATN, head phones, Schoeps mike, fiberglass collapsible boom. \$3500. Call: (212) 334-8122, NY, 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

● **FOR SALE:** French Eclair acl w/ Angenieux 12-120 zoom, 2 200' mags, quick charger, 3 batteries, pistol grip, travel case, accessories. Only 20,000' shot, 1 owner. Perfect condition, \$5500; \$4500 w/o lens. Contact: Dennis Lanson, Bx 84, West Dummerston VT 05357.

● **FOR SALE:** Fast-folding "Daylite" rear screen for rear projection. Used only 3 times. Erects in 15 minutes, packs in suitcase for easy storage, travel. Perfect for process shots, multi-media, etc. \$500, half manufacturer's price. Call: (212) 226-4229, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Panasonic 9600 series ¾" editing system. Includes 9600 edit deck, 9240 record deck, A960 edit controller, 2 12" NEC color monitor/receivers, all connecting cables. Excellent condition, \$6000. Panasonic 5500A SEG/Switcher, like new. \$2500; if purchased w/edit system \$2000. Bolex Pro 16mm film camera; includes 12-120 Angenieux zoom lens, 2 400' mags, case, monopod. Good condition, \$2000. Contact: Dan Reeves, RR #2, Bx 69 A, Interlaken NY 14847, (607) 387-6041.

● **FOR SALE:** Eclair NPR, 10-150 Ang., Alcan motor, 3 mags, orientable finder, O'Connor 50, Lissand legs, 2 batts, filters, cases tip-top shape, \$6300. Angenieux 9.5-57, fluid zoom, data rings. Like new, \$2200. Call: (212) 222-9352, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Detroit area offices & conference rooms, studios, remote service equipment, telephone, mail & secretarial services. Also, can arrange hotel lodging, transportation to & from airport, car rentals, etc. for out-of-town producers. Contact: D. Lynne McRae, Video Production Center, 791 Industrial Ct., Bloomfield Hills MI 48013, (313) 332-1540.

● **FOR RENT:** Broadcast & industrial equip, cameras, ¾ & ½" VCRs, audio & lighting equip, accessories. Multi-camera prod. w/special effects generator available w/crew. Low prices, high quality from media arts center. Contact: Locus Communications, (212) 757-4220, NY.

● **LOOKING TO BUY/RENT:** 16mm Steenbeck to rent for occasional office use. Unique exchange or work arrangement possible, e.g. free editing room or secretarial services. Will buy if willing to sell. Contact: Patti, (617) 235-8100. MA.

● **FOR RENT:** Space. SpaceSearch has comprehensive directory of performing, rehearsal, exhibition & audio-visual space in NYC. Available by borough/citywide or by use, e.g. media arts, etc. Complete SpaceSearch \$17. Contact: SpaceSearch,

## NOTICES

Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others included as space permits. Send Notices to Mary Guzzy, THE INDEPENDENT, c/o FIVE, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. For further info, call (212) 473-3400. Deadline: 8th of second preceding month (e.g., Aug. 8 for October). Edited by Mary Guzzy and Claudia Gomez.

### Buy • Rent • Sell

● **FOR SALE:** Double unit Audio Ltd. RMS 8 wireless system. 2 wireless channels in a single receiver. Excellent condition, \$1,750. Contact: Larry Loewinger, (212) 226-2429, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Beaulieu RB16 w/12-120 ang. & batt.—IKMQ. Best offer. Call: (212) 598-4247, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Beaulieu S2008 silent/multi-speed S-8 camera, Angenieux 8-64mm zoom lens. \$499. Call: (213) 828-2525, CA.

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm editing room equip. 16mm 6-plate Steenbeck, ST 900W, editing bench w/rewinds, Moviscop viewer & Moviola synchronizer, CIR splicer. \$7500. Bolex H16 Reflex w/MST motor & battery, vario-Switar 18-86mm zoom, Switar 25mm, Bolex tripod & various accessories, in excellent condition. \$1500. B&H Eyemo w/new 400' mag, motor cinemat 100, Baltar 100mm & 25, Kinar 25, Eyemax 50. Best offer. Contact: Richard Elson, (514) 844-0903, (514) 651-5512, Quebec, Canada.

● **FOR SALE:** JVC editing system, CR 8200U recorder, CP 5500 player & RM 88U controller. All in



Cultural Assistance Center Inc., Rm 1701, 330 West 42 St., NYC 10036, (212) 947-6340.

● **FOR RENT IN NICARAGUA:** Sony M-3 camera, 4800 deck, monitor, tripod, mikes, lighting. Reasonable rates for equip & cameraperson; crew as needed. Contact: Gabrielle Baur, Christina Konrad c/o Veronic Pfranger, Instituto Historico Centro Americo, Managua, phone #72572.

● **FOR RENT:** Nagra III, crystal synch, adapted for 7½" reels, case, AC adaptor. Excellent condition. Reservation & deposit required. Contact: Theresa Weedy, (212) 447-3280, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Broadcast eng. gear w/ Ikegami HL83, Sony BVU 110 w/time code, lights, mikes, Sasadler tripod. International crew for local rates. Contact: Lisa, Metro Video, (212) 267-8221, (212) 608-6005, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Eclair ACL, 3-200 mags, 12-120, case, etc., \$3400. JVC 4400LU, broadcast, A/C adapter, 2 batts, kangaroo case, etc., \$1100. IDI crystal sync recorder Sony TC 158 based, balanced mike inputs, 2 channel mixing, self resolving, \$700. Jaytex edit controller, VSEC-42TC \$500. VGEN w/fade \$450. Showchron 8 plate, 1 pie, 3 snd., \$4500. All are in excellent condition, recently overhauled. Contact: Anderson Film, 809 Scott Dr., Arlington TX 76012, (817) 461-1228.

● **FOR SALE:** Bolex H-16S w/pan cinor 17-85 zoom reflex lens, Bolex MST motor 7 pin. Recently checked by Bolex & re-celled. 400' mag & motor complete. Sync cord, pistol grip, filters. Bolex H-16 M—takes MST—w/10 mm Angenieux & variable speed electric motor. UHER 4200 IC stereo report w/snc cord for MST. Bolex tripod w/ball joint. \$2800 for all. Contact: Bruce, (212) 206-9242 daytime, (212) 942-9612 after 9, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Steenbeck, 6-plate 1900 model, in excellent condition; fast rewind, left extension, footage meter, voltage regulator, \$14,500. Eclair NPR w/ Angenieux zoom lens. Constant speed motor, batts, 2 mags, cable, carrying cases. Contact: Pat, (607) 594-2442, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Complete video editing system, almost new. JVC 8250U & 6650U VCRs, 300 hrs. RM-88U Controller. Panasonic color S1300N monitor & 1330 V monitor/receiver. \$7500. Call: (617) 739-7044, 864-5154, MA.

● **FOR SALE:** 1 plate 16mm Steenbecks. \$7250 & up. Arri S, Angenieux 12-120, 1 Arri tripod. Arri Pan Cinor zoom 17-85. Contact: Filmus, (212) 581-2365, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 6-plate Steenbeck ST 1900 w/1000" fast rewind. 11 yrs. old, well maintained, very good condition. Call: (212) 226-3032, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** JVC CR 8200U ¾" edit deck. Vertical interval head switching. Original owner, less than 600 hrs. \$2900. Call: (617) 666-3372, MA.

● **FOR RENT:** Steenbecks delivered to your workspace. Reasonable rates, prompt repairs. By the month. Contact: Octavio or Pat, (212) 855-8366, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Panasonic industrial special effect, low-light color camera. WV-3230. Like new, \$600. Contact: William or Kathleen Laziza, (212) 228-4674, NY.

**FOR SALE:** Moviola M86 flatbed editor, flicker-free prism, low wow & flutter, quick stop circuit, torque motor box, 3 yrs. old, excellent condition. Fair price. Contact: Ron, (617) 354-6054, MA.

● **FOR SALE:** 6-plate Steenbeck; old but good, rebuilt w/additional amplifier & speaker: \$6000 or best offer. Call: (212) 765-8860, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Complete broadcast-quality production pkg. Includes Ikegami HL-83, ¾" JVC 4700U, color Videotek monitor, wave-form, mikes, lights & tripod. Production personnel also available. Competitive rates. Contact: Everglade Prods., (212) 925-1247, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Ikegami HL-79A, BVU 110, lights, mikes, insurance. \$450/day. Radio mikes, car, sunglasses, crew additional as required. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Tektronix waveform monitor, \$650. Panasonic NV-9300A. \$900. JVC 4400 portable ¾". \$1200. Frezzolini battery belts, 6AH. \$125. Sharp 13" monitor receiver, \$300. JVC KY 2000. \$2400. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony 366 reel-to-reel 7" tape deck. Quarterback stereo, 3 heads, new belts, rollers, playback head, edit feature. Nagra compatible. Best offer. Call (212) 548-2875 evenings 6-10 pm, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** New Sony M-3 camera w/3 tubes; BVU 110 or 4800 deck; batteries, monitor, tripod, mikes & Lowell lighting. Very portable. Reasonable rates for equipment & cameraperson; crew as needed. Contact: Alan, (212) 222-3321; Caryn, (212) 222-6748, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Sunny attractive offices, furnished or unfurnished w/private entrances. Near west Village. 1, 2, & 3 room suites. Additional conference/screening room & office equipment available to share. Very high floor, excellent panoramic views, small terraces, air conditioning. 24 hr. building, excellent security. Sublet. Reasonable. Call: (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** State-of-the-art 16mm film equipment at incredibly low rates. Call: (212) 222-6699, NY.

## Conferences • Seminars

● **INDEPENDENT FEATURE MARKET:** Oct. 10-19 at Cinema 3, Central Park South, NY. Includes feature-length premieres, Video Sidebar w/works in 55-75 minute range. For market's schedule & participants, contact: Paul Smart, IFP, 1776 Broadway, ninth fl., NYC 10019, (212) 245-1622.

● **TAHOE FILM AND VIDEO WORKSHOPS:** University credit for each one-wk. workshop. Sept. 16-22: Magic of the Movies—Special Effects, Steadicam & Panaglide workshop at Lake Tahoe/Squaw Valley. Oct. 21-27: Video Editing I & II. Oct. 28-Nov. 3: Video Production at Hollywood CA. Nov. 4-10: Film Directing II, Cinematography & Lighting II at Laguna Beach CA. Contact: Al Bourdet, Tahoe Film & Video Workshops, PO Bx 969, Truckee CA 95734, (916) 587-4500.

● **UNION FOR DEMOCRATIC COMMUNICATIONS:** Conference & general meeting to be held Oct. 19-21, in Washington DC. Theme addresses crucial political issues related to communications; includes audio, videotapes, films. Contact: Anna Zornosa, 3116 16 St. NW, Washington DC 20010.

● **VIDEO EXPO NY:** Oct. 1-5. Exhibits of very latest in video equip. & technology. Expanded seminar includes intensive full/half day & 2 hr. sessions to respond to basic, intermediate & highly advanced needs, interests of video pros. Contact: Sheila Alper, Knowledge Industry Publications Inc., 701 Westchester Ave., White Plains NY 10604. Call toll free EST (800) 431-1880, in NY (914) 328-9157.

● **VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS** workshops Sept. 11, 18, 26 at Brooklyn Arts & Culture Assoc. Center, 111 Willoughby St. Topics covered include not-for-profit incorporation, copyright laws applied to visual arts, contract issues. No admission charge. Contact: Charles Reichenthal, (212) 783-4469.

● **CMX EDITING W/DIGITAL/ANALOG VIDEO SYNTHESIZERS:** Sundays at editing studios of Matrix Video in midtown NYC. Topics covered include: fundamentals of time code editing, state-of-the-art switcher, digital special effects, ADO, DVE, ESS-2 still store, vidfont V Graphics computer. \$45 including handouts & question/answer session w/CMX editor about your project & possible special effects. Contact: 185 Corp., Bx 1923, Cadman Plaza Station, Brooklyn NY 11202.

● **COMPUTERIZED EDITING & OPERATION:** Classes taught year-round on monthly basis in NY, Chicago & LA. Also classes Sept. 15-23 in Washington DC. Professional hands-on training. Contact: Shirley Craig, 6273 Callicott Ave., Woodland Hills CA 91367, (818) 992-4481.

● **NORTH AMERICAN TV INSTITUTE** offers new seminar series on production, technical & marketing techniques designed for broadcast/TV industry; Oct. 3-5 in NYC. Contact: Sheila Alper, Knowledge Industry Publications Inc., 701 Westchester Ave., White Plains NY 10604, toll-free EST (800) 431-1880. In NY call (914) 328-9157.

● **ADVANCED FILMMAKING SKILLS:** Advanced training in 16mm film & video production. Members of groups traditionally denied access to film training & those w/o other training options strongly encouraged to apply. Deadline Oct. 15 for Nov., limited space. Contact: Third World Newsreel, 160 Fifth Ave., Ste. 911, NYC 10010, (212) 243-2310 betw. 2-4 p.m. only.

● **HOME VIDEO EXPLOSION:** A one-day tactical conference on the challenge & opportunity of home video publishing; info on informed publishing decisions, home video market data. Contact: Knowledge Industry Publ., 701 Westchester Ave., White Plains, NY 10604, toll free (800) 431-1800, in NY (914) 328-9157.

## Editing Facilities

● **THE EDITING POST** offers ¾" editing at \$50/hr. w/editor. System includes JVC CR-8250 recorder w/vertical interval head switching & balanced audio inputs—broadcast standards, Chyron VP-1 graphics, time-base correction and full time code capability, including window dubs. Discounts for longer projects. Convenient midtown NY location; 24 hr., 7 day access. Book time M-F, 10 am-6 pm. Contact: Gerry Pallor, (212) 757-4220, NY.

● **QUIET EDITING ROOM IN SOHO:** Rough cuts, cataloguing, time code edit lists, clip reels, supervised dubs, viewing. \$15/hr. w/experienced editor; 4 hr. minimum. Do it yourself, \$50/6 hrs.; 10 am-4 pm or 4 pm-10 pm. Call: (212) 925-6059, NY.



● **UPPER WEST SIDE STEENBECK RENTAL:** 8-plate or 6-plate; reasonable rates. Call: (212) 874-7444, NY.

● **EDITOR OF ACADEMY AWARD-**nominated documentary now cuts 3/4" video off-line. JVC decks w/FM dub, Cezar IVC microprocessor controller, special effects keyer & colorizer, fade to black, waveform & pulse cross monitor, b&w graphics camera w/animation stand & titling system, mikes, turntable, audio cassette, VHS time code burn in. \$25/hr. for projects under \$3500. Contact: Bruce Ettinger, (212) 226-8489, NY.

● **OFF LINE ON COST EDITING:** New high-speed equip. Fully computerized edit decision, list management w/printout. Rough cuts, clip reels, window dubs, time coding available. Quiet cool editing room; everything \$20/hr. Contact: Bob Wiegand, (212) 925-6059, NY.

● **STAND-BY:** Major midtown Manhattan video studio provides post production facilities at night to non-commercial videomakers at special rate. Seeks to encourage experimental work in video medium. The 185 Corp. (not-for-profit) administers program & invites independent producers & video artists to submit projects to program. Contact: Stand-by, 185 Corp., Bx 1923, Cadman Plaza Station, Brooklyn NY 11202.

● **PLAYBACK EQUIP. & FACILITIES:** Video playback equip. 1/2" open reel, VHS, Beta, 3/4", 1" monitors available for inhouse/out of house use. Can provide equip. for multi-purpose situations. Facilities can accommodate 1-100 people. Rates upon request. Contact: Video Inn, 261 Powell St., Vancouver BC Canada V6A 1G3, tel. 68VIDEO.

● **PAL, SECAM & NTSC 3/4" video viewing facilities** are available at Third World Newsreel. Please call about rates and appointments. Third World Newsreel, 160 Fifth Ave., Rm. 911, New York, NY 10010, (212) 243-2310.

● **SELF-SERVICE EDITING:** 3/4" JVC Tape-handlers, RM-88U editor, free instruction. \$20/hr. Transfers, dubs, etc. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **MOVIOLA M-77s FOR RENT:** \$500/mo. in your workspace. 15% discount to AIVF members. Contact: Philmaster Productions, (212) 873-4470, NY.

● **LARGE EDIT ROOM** w/6-plate Steenbeck. Windows, carpet, phone, access to video deck, copy machine, etc. Contact: Bob McBride, Earhrise, 330 West 42 St., NY NY 10036, (212) 594-6967.

● **EDITING ROOM:** Fully equipped w/6-plate flat-bed Moviola, bins, synchronizer, viewer & splicer. Near Greenwich Village west. High floor, panoramic view, small terrace. Conference/screening room to share. Also available for sublet office & office equipment. 24 hr. building, excellent security, reasonable. Call: (212) 206-1213, NY.

● **VIDEO EDITING & TIME CODING:** 3/4" hi-speed video editing on new JVC 8250 w/convergence control. \$20/\$30 per hour. Low rates for time coding & time code editing. Call: Inpoint Production, (212) 679-3172, NY.

● **TWO COMPLETE EDITING ROOMS** in Chelsea: (a) 24-hr. access: Moviola flatbed w/torque motor box; complete 16mm edit equipment; complete kitchen & bathroom; minimal office facilities; telephone; air conditioning. (b) 10am-6pm access; Steenbeck;

# 20/20 Video Productions

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● **EDITING & POST-PRODUCTION FACILITIES AVAILABLE:** Short-term rentals only. 9am-5pm business days, KEM 8-plate, 16/35mm, 3/4" editing, sound transfer, narration recording, extensive sound effects library, interlock screening. Contact: Cinetudes Film Productions, 295 West 4 St., NY NY 10014; (212) 966-4600.

● **BRODSKY & TREADWAY S-8 & 8MM FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER MASTERS:** Scene-by-scene density & total color correction, variable speed & freeze frame, sound from any source. Artists & broadcasters like our work. By appointment only. Call (617) 666-3372, MA.

● **STEENBECKS FOR RENT:** Moderately priced by the month. Delivered to your workspace. Prompt repairs included. Call: Paul, (212) 316-2913, NY.

● **LARGE COMFORTABLE EDITING ROOM** w/KEM 8-plate Universal editing table, 16mm & 35mm, rewinds, bins, splicers, synchronizers, etc., private phone; additional office space available. Mid-town location. Call: Errol Morris Films, 1697 Broadway, NY NY 10019, (212) 757-7478/582-4045.

● **REGULAR & S-8 FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER:** Professional quality, industrial or broadcast; much better than you've seen before. Contact: Landy, 400 East 83 St. #4A, NY NY 10028; (212) 734-1402.

● **SONY BVU 3/4" EDITING:** \$25/hr. w/editor. (212) 242-2320, NY.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

● **COMEDY VIDEOTAPES & FILMS** wanted. Also, indies w/a comedy focus. Contact: Mawkish Pastiche, (212) 254-8618, NY.

● **MOUNTAIN JOURNAL** seeks films, tapes, stills for doc. on war tax resistance covering individual war tax resisters, tax day actions, & position of IRS. Contact: Karen Rappaport, 216 Sherwood St., Star City WV 26505, (304) 599-1689.

● **TUCSON WOMEN'S CABLE CONSORTIUM** seeks 1/2 or 3/4" videotapes produced by or about women to be aired on public access cable. Contact: Tucson Women's Cable Consortium, 902 E. Hampton, Tucson AZ 85719, (602) 624-8318.

● **WNYC-TV SEEKS INNOVATIVE FILM & VIDEO** for prime time acquisitions. Especially interested in local (i.e. NYC) productions of superior quality not otherwise distributed through a national network. Contact: Program Acquisition Dept., 1 Centre St., NYC 10007, (212) 669-7800.

● **TELEVISION IDEAS** seeks independent films/tapes for late/night early morning network & cable programming. Contact: Laird Brooks Schmidt, TVL, 2710 West 100 St., Bloomington NM 55431.

● **FRONTAL EXPOSURE:** A monthly showcase of independent film & video programs is accepting submissions in 3/4" and/or 16mm formats. \$50 paid to works broadcast. Contact: Frontal Exposure, KQED, 500 8 St., San Francisco CA 94103, (415) 864-2000, ext. 323.

● **FILM ART FUND/ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES** is conducting nationwide search for independent videomakers who were making tapes in the 1960-70s, especially between 1965-75. Seek to borrow videographics, personal histories, preservation copies of tapes, published articles—raw materials for historians of video. Contact: FAF/FAA, 491 Broadway, NYC 10012, (212) 226-0010.

● **THE KITCHEN** seeks videotapes of all genres for exhibition & distribution. Send 3/4" copies w/name, address, phone #, & any supplementary info to: The Kitchen, 59 Wooster St., NYC 10012.

● **AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTOR** seeks audio/visual material for sale/rental/swapping. All material will be made available on PAL video. NTSC to PAL transfer can be done at this end. Contact: Scan-Trace Video Productions, 3 Franklin Ave., Chelsea 3196 Vic. Australia.

● **NEW FILMMAKERS SHOWCASE:** Submit films for monthly screenings. Contact: Andrea Sacker/Adam Zucker, Collective for Living Cinema, 52 White St., NYC 10013.

● **CASH PAID** for all film/video shown on weekly cable access programs examining development of independent production. Contact: Cincinnati Video Project, 1009 St. Gregory, Ste. 2, Cincinnati OH 45202, (513) 721-5045.

● **NIGHTFLIGHT** seeks short tapes & films by students & young artists for its "New Filmmakers" segment on USA Cable. \$10/min. paid to selected filmmakers. Contact: Carrie Franklin, ATI Video Enterprises, 888 7 Ave., NYC 10016, (212) 977-2300.

● **FILMMAKER SEEKS FOOTAGE** of or relating to noted American poet/activist Allen Ginsberg. V-tape, 8 mm, 16mm, stills, recordings needed. Contact: J. Aronson c/o Info Service, Bx 1042, Boulder CO 80306, (303) 444-6352.

● **WNET-13 INDEPENDENT FOCUS** series accepting submissions of independently produced work for broadcast. Deadline Oct. 1. Submission procedures available. Contact: Emily Eiten, Independent Focus, WNET, 356 West 58 St., NYC 10019, (212) 560-2917.

● **SAN FRANCISCO STATE U's** cable TV station Channel 35 seeks 3/4" & 16mm works in all genres by indies. Selected works featured on weekly program to begin this fall. For info packet on submission requirements, contact: Special Programs, Channel 35, BCA Dept., SFSU, 1600 Holloway, SF CA 94132.

● **ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS** of U Penn seeks tapes & films for International Visual Communications Conference on May 30, 1985. Conference will bring together scholars, practitioners, students to screen & discuss films/tapes. Do not send film or tape. School will decide which film/video makers to invite based on applications. For application, contact: Jay Ruby, Program Director, Annenberg School of Communications, 3620 Walnut St., #C5, Philadelphia PA 19104-3858, (215) 898-7037.

● **TV-NIGHT EXERCISES:** Swedish television project based on artist videotapes seeks materials. Payment on all works broadcast. Send short U-Matic screening cassette, include phone number & address. Cassettes will be returned after completion of screening and/or broadcast. Contact: Nattovning, Peter R. Meyer, GA/E5, Swedish Television 2, 105 10, Stockholm, Sweden.

● **FILMMAKERS/VIDEO ARTISTS** working w/comedy & interested in having works distributed to nightclubs, bars & restaurants. Contact: Zoom Video, (212) 737-5606, NY.

● **FOX/LORBER ASSOCIATES**, specialists in TV marketing & distribution, expanding feature film library for representation. Interested in full-length English language films w/primarily narrative structure for sale to pay TV/cable, broadcast & home video, both domestic & foreign. Minimum length: 60 min.; no subtitles. Contact: Ericka Markman, Fox/Lorber Assocs., 79 Madison Ave., #601, NY NY 10016; (212) 686-6777.

● **PELICAN FILMS** seeks films/tapes for distribution to holistic health movement. We offer alternatives to traditional non-theatrical distribution. Contact: Arthur Hoyle, 3010 Santa Monica Blvd. #440, Santa Monica, CA 90404; (213) 399-3753.

● **DISTRIBUTOR** of 16mm environmental issues films seeks new titles for developing catalog. Contact: Umbrella Films, 60 Blake Rd., Brookline MA 02146, (617) 277-6639.

## Freelancers

● **TRANSLATOR/TRANSCRIPTOR** from Spanish to English available for reasonable rates. Experienced in treatments, proposals, subtitles, publicity. Contact: Annabel, (212) 923-5728.

● **FILMMAKER** available to work w/director &/or in production as intern on independent feature film. Hard worker, interested in independent filmmaking as career. Contact: Michael S. Royce, 204 Sherwood Dr., DeWitt NY 13214, (315) 446-8557.

● **FILM TITLE SERVICE:** Typeset & prepare artwork \$100. Shoot, develop & workprint \$200. Contact: Charlie, (212) 598-9111 or 982-3014, NY.

● **FILM COMPOSER AVAILABLE:** Experienced w/strong classical background; teaches film composing, Manhattan School of Music. Contact: Ed Green, (212) 533-4303, NY.

● **KEY LIGHT PRODUCTIONS** offers full range of video services for news/docs, industrial, training & educational projects, theater/dance pieces, other events. Broadcast location crew available. Reasonable rates, w/ or w/out field producer. Call (212) 989-8157, 581-9748, NY.

● **SAN FRANCISCO GAFFER AVAILABLE:** Second unit camera; features, docs, industrials, commercials. In partnership w/camerawoman Caris Palm at Sobrante Studios. Contact: Steve Shriver, (415) 222-7377, CA.

● **MUSIC FOR FILM:** Original scoring in all styles. Quality work. Top references, tape available. Contact: William Mason & Tim Reed, (212) 777-5974, NY.

● **PRODUCER/DIRECTOR AVAILABLE** for independent docs, film, video, AV. Contact: Bruce, (212) 942-9612, NY.

● **PRODUCTION/GRIPPING:** Experienced in video, theater, docs. Want to learn more about all aspects of film production. Hard-working, reliable grad student. Contact: Mike, (904) 644-3306, FL.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE:** for low-



budget features. Contact: Felix Parnell, (212) 759-9216, NY.

● **SCRIPT SUPERVISOR** available to work on independent features & shorts. Contact: Mindy Rodman, (212) 636-1426, NY.

● **PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT:** Can offer assistance in development, publicity campaigns, developing marketing & promotional materials. Contact: Kristen Simone, (212) 289-8299, NY.

● **VIDEOGRAPHER** w/new Sony DXC-M3 3-tube camera ready to shoot docs, dance & other projects. Deck, mikes, accessories & crew as needed; rates negotiable. Contact: L. Goodsmith, (212) 898-8157, NY.

● **GAFFER** available for docs, low-budget features & shorts. 12 yrs. experience in theater, video & film. Contact: Chris, (212) 499-3219, NY.

● **ASST. ART DIRECTOR** currently freelancing in print seeks work in production design. Some film experience. Resume, portfolio available. Contact: Eva, (212) 724-3879, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** w/Arri 16Sr, fast lenses & lights. Fluent in French, Spanish. Negotiable rates. Contact: Pedro Bonilla, (213) 454-8909, CA.

● **NEWS CREW AVAILABLE** w/16mm & ¾" production gear. Professional credits on request. Contact: Pacific St. Films, 630 Ninth Ave., NY NY 10036, (212) 875-9722.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** for fiction, documentary. Fully equipped including Aaton 7LTR, Cooke 10.4-52, 16 or S16, Super Speed, L. T1.3 Reasonable rates. Contact: Igor Sunara, (212) 249-0416, NY.

● **PENNY WARD/VIDEO:** Rentals—Sony DXC-1800 camera, Beta 1 Portapak mike & monitor w/operator, \$150/day; same w/VO-4800 deck, \$175/day. Transfers—½" Beta to ¾", \$10/hr. Viewing—½" Beta & ¾", \$5/hr. Editor—\$10/hr. Call: (212) 228-1427, NY.

● **AWARD-WINNING CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/over 10 yrs. experience in film & video ready for work on docs, low-budget features & shorts. 16mm film & 3-tube broadcast plumbicon w/¾" broadcast deck. Lighting, grip, mikes, accessories & crews as needed. Professional credits & tape on request. Rates fully negotiable. Contact: Val Galperin, Image House, (212) 863-7298/344-6676, NY.

● **CAMERA ASSISTANT** w/Aaton 7 LTR for hire. Lighting & grip package available. Contact: John, (914) 473-0633, NY.

● **RESEARCHER:** Access & familiarity w/all NYC libraries & Library of Congress in DC. Efficient & meticulous w/background in history, political economy & filmmaking. Rate negotiable. Contact: Danny, (212) 924-4711, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/16mm Aaton & lights available to work w/independents on doc & narrative films. Negotiable rates. Contact: East Marion Films, (212) 420-0335, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** specializing in Hispanic subjects, US or Latin America, available for documentary. Fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, French,

German, Russian, English OK, too. CP GSMO, lights, sound, editing facilities. Based in Santa Fe. Contact: Pachon Lane, PO Box 266, Cerrillos NM 87010, (505) 982-6800.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/15 yrs. experience in 35mm & 16mm interested in independent fiction films. Fluent in French. Contact: Babette Mangolte, (212) 925-6329, NY.

● **OVEREAGER STUDENT** interested in independent film career available for interning/working on independent features in production & w/director, if possible. Begin any time after Jan. 1, 1985 depending on location. Proficient in camera, sound, lighting & grip work; hard worker will work through summer if

needed. Contact: Michael Royce, 204 Sherwood Dr., DeWitt NY 13214, (315) 446-8557.

## Opportunities/Gigs

● **TEXAS COMMISSION ON THE ARTS** seeks artists for Artists in Education program which place pro. artists in learning environments in residencies from 1 wk. to 1 yr. Residencies throughout TX. Contact: TCA, (512) 475-6593, (800) 252-9415 or write The Media Project, 1519 West Main, Houston TX 77006.

● **AMERICAN INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM MARKET** seeks dedicated volunteers for Market on 10/10-10/19. Substantial rewards for those interested in filmmaking & film buying. Volunteers get free film viewing time & free entrance to seminar on independent filmmaking. Contact: Laurie Newbound, Market

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• **VIDEO ARTISTS NEEDED:** New multi-media company seeks creative video artists w/ own equip. to be part of exciting new multi-media ensemble. Contact: Mitchell (212) 772-7622, 246-8484, NY.

• **SHORTSTUFF PRODUCTIONS INC.** seeks original short subjects of any length for TV distribution. Contact: Shortstuff, PO Bx 181, Times Square Station, NYC 10108.

• **SUBMIT PROPOSALS FOR GALLERY INSTALLATION:** Film, video & photography eligible. Send brief narrative, resume, visual documentation & suggested budget. Contact: Randy Osman, Gray Art Gallery, School of Art, East Carolina U, Greenville, NC 27834.

• **VIDEO MOVIES IS LOOKING FOR WRITERS:** Video movies is new mass-market magazine which reviews/discusses films on videotape. Queries must include writing samples. Contact: Darrall Moore, Assoc. Editor Video Movies, 3841 West Oakton, Skokie IL 60076, (312) 676-3470.

• **FILM/VIDEO ARTIST—FILMMAKERS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM:** SC Arts Commission, 2-6 wk. residencies; submit resume, films, S-8 or 16mm, or 3/4" videotapes w/production dates. SASE for return of film & tape. Reviewed & returned w/in 6-8 wks. of receipt. Contact: Personnel Office, SC Arts Commission, 1800 Geva's St., Columbia SC 29201.

• **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** seeks experienced writer/producer to collaborate on serious docs. Contact: Richard Chisolm, 2802 Maryland Ave., Baltimore MD 21218. (301) 467-2997.

• **CINEMATOGRAPHER WANTED:** Must have knowledge of film in Africa & have own equip. or know how to gain access to some. Ready to work w/an independent filmmaker willing to help produce film on low budget. Send sampling of work if desired. Contact: Quay, Bx 46, Syracuse NY 13201, (315) 424-8978.

• **PRODUCERS/INDEPENDENTS WANTED** to become part of national cable TV network to produce family shows. Nationwide magazine format tailored to local communities; able to use video & film, 16mm & Super 8. Contact: Jay Gierkey, Sojourn Prod., PO Bx 6, Cedar MI 49621, (616) 228-5015.

• **LI FILM ORGANIZATION** needs person w/PR skills to handle membership, media & promotional writing. Send resume & 3 writing samples. Contact: Charlotte Sky, New Community Cinema, PO Bx 498, Huntington NY 11743, (516) 423-7619.

• **IN AFRICA, ASIA LATIN AMERICA:** Seeking local video teams w/access to 3/4" gear, local journalists to write & shoot news features, docs, travelogues & other programs concerning their countries. Readers, please let us know about your friends in those places who don't see this ad. Contact: Scott Shuster, Case Postale 18, 1218 Geneva Switzerland. By telex: (Switzerland) 422442 txc ch, attn. Shuster/Presse. Tel.: (41-22) 988-295.

• **FILM PROGRAMMER/EDUCATOR:** Position available at non-profit center for film & performing arts. Film programming & educational skills. Send resume or inquiry. Contact: Arnie Malina, Executive

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Director, Helena Film Society, 9 Placer St., Helena MT 59601, (406) 443-0287.

### Publications

• **1984 SATELLITE DIRECTORY:** entire satellite industry w/entries including company name, address, phone #, description of products & services. Directory provides info on consultants, associations, institutes, etc., that are connected w/satellite field. 15,000 listings, 965 pp., \$197 individual order + 5.75 shipping. Contact: Phillips Publishing, Ste. 1200 N, 7315 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda MD 20814.

• **ROUGH CUT:** Quarterly newsletter published by The Maine Alliance of Media Arts, a service organization to support independent filmmakers & projects. MAMA membership \$20 includes Rough Cut, free entrance to membership meetings, reduced admission for MAMA events. Contact: MAMA, Bx 4320, Station A, Portland ME 04101.

• **PIXEL—THE COMPUTER ANIMATION NEWSLETTER** keeps you up-to-date w/latest happenings in Computer Animation, including techniques, facilities & productions for commercials, films, education & TV broadcast. Monthly; \$286/yr. Contact: Pixel, 217 George St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5A 2M9.

• **THE VIDEODISC BOOK:** Guide & directory reference for the videodisc industry. Includes creative aspects, production, manufacture, uses, programming, existing titles. 480 pp. \$89.95 + shipping, local sales tax. Contact: John Wiley & Sons Inc., PO Bx 063, Somerset NJ 08873.

• **VIDEO EDITING AND POST PRODUCTION: A PROFESSIONAL GUIDE:** Specifies 3 basic steps of process—preparation, offline & online editing. Gives steps for transforming production footage into finished video program. Contains 100+ illust., sample budget format, post production checklist, short history of video editing, basic TV technology, etc. 170 pp., \$34.95 hardcover, \$24.95 student's edition. Contact: Karen Abrams, Marketing Dept., Knowledge Industry Publications Inc., 701 Westchester Ave., White Plains NY 10604, (914) 328-9157.

• **HOME VIDEO CASSETTE/DISC PUBLISHING: THE DYNAMICS OF DISTRIBUTION, 1984 AND BEYOND:** A study by the Fairfield Group about volatile & ever-changing nature of home video industry. Includes 50+ statistical tables & charts, chronology of events involved in evolution of present-day home video industry, model cost & profit statements for each distribution segment. \$975. Contact: Barbara Miller, Knowledge Industry Publications, 701 Westchester Ave., White Plains NY 10604, (914) 328-9157.

• **AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CINEMATOGRAPHERS** publishes 3 new books. *The ASC Treasury of Visual Effects* gives evolution of special effects in motion picture industry; written by pros in the field. Illustrated w/stills & art from 1895 to present. Clothbound, \$29.95 + 2.50 shipping (CA add 1.95 sales tax). *Anton Wilson's Cinema Workshop*



gives series of technical discussions on subjects from cameras & lenses to batteries, meters, & mikes. Paperback, \$8.95 + 1.00 shipping (CA add .54 sales tax). *Electronic Production Techniques* has 40+ articles from *American Cinematographer* magazine w/illustrations & diagrams. Surveys basics of video production. Paperback, \$7.95 + 2.00 shipping (CA add .52 sales tax). Contact: American Cinematographer, PO Bx 2230, Hollywood CA 90078.

● **FOUNDATION GRANTS TO INDIVIDUALS:** Directory profiles 950 foundations that provide support to individuals & lists essential contact, fiscal & background data. Includes scholarships & loans, fellowships, grants for foreigners, internships & residencies, awards & prizes, grants restricted to company employees & locations, etc. Standard reference; \$18. Contact: The Foundation Center, 888 7 Ave., NYC 10106.

● **HISTORIANS AND FILMMAKERS: TOWARD COLLABORATION:** The proceedings of a symposium where 35 well-known filmmakers & historians discussed issues surrounding collaborative efforts in rendering history on film. \$3.00 + 1.00 shipping. Contact: The Institute for Research in History, Historians & Filmmakers, 432 Park Ave., South, Ste. 1115, NYC 10016.

● **REVERSAL:** New independent film journal. \$10/yr. Contact: Reversal, 30 Beery St., San Francisco CA 94107.

● **WOMEN IN MOTION:** Compendium of those women around the world who have edited, written, or directed major films since the birth of industry. 248-pp. book for serious film buffs & scholars. Film entries limited to 16mm movies available for rental/sale. Contact: Popular Press, Bowling Green State U, Bowling Green OH 43403.

● **THE 1984 EDITION of Reel Change,** the guide to social issue media is now in the works, and is being published by the Film Fund in cooperation with Media Network. If you have an appropriate film or videotape filmography or listing of social issue media, please send written information to: Renee Tajima, Media Network, 208 W. 13th St., New York, NY 10011, or call (212) 222-5189.

## Resources / Funds

● **NEA** has restructured region for Regional Fellowship Program, formerly the Southwest Independent Production Fund. RFP region: TX, LA, AR, OF, KS, NE MO, PR, USVI. Those artists in NM & AZ formerly in SWIPF program now in Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowship Program. Note to artists in LA: in 1985, apply for RFP through Appalshop, Bx 743, Whitesburg KY 41858.

● **ZEEKS®**: Life-size characters in 3-D. If you can imagine it, I can create it to look like anyone from "Betty Boop" to "Realistic Clones" in lightweight yet rigid mixed media. Can be used for displays & ads, or Zeek can be "mechanized" for film animations. Unusual portfolio. Contact: Sara Fox, (212) 851-3137 or American Artists Rep., (212) 682-2462, NY.

● **SOUNDTRACK AUDIOCASSETTES** now available for "Investments in Motion Pictures" seminar held last May. Receive same kit of info & stats given to attendees. Registration list of bankers, investors, producers, pay TV execs who attended included. \$195. Contact: Paul Kagan, PK Services Corp., 26386 Carmel Rancho Ln., Carmel CA 93923.

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Mitchell Kriegman  
Richard Landry  
Ardele Lister  
Andy Mann  
Robert Morris  
Bruce Nauman  
Claes Oldenbourg  
Charlemagne Palestine  
Mark Rappaport  
Robert Rauschenberg  
Edward Ruscha  
Richard Serra  
Paul Sharits  
David Shulman  
Michael Smith  
Michael Snow  
Keith Sonnier  
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Lawrence Weiner

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● **NEW VOICES** is a 20-minute videotape that examines how non-profit organizations use emerging technologies. Aimed at directors of organizations ineffective in gaining access to "marketplace of ideas" & for general audience to show TV's political power. Includes footage from TV programs & ads, political ads, news, original & archive material from Public Interest Video Network. Tape offered to non-profit community by PIVN on regular basis, but also available for sale/rental. Contact: PIVN, 1736 Columbia Rd., Washington DC 20009, (202) 797-8997.

● **ANNENBERG/CPB** application guidelines for funding now available. Projects using telecommunications technologies for purposes of higher education submit proposals through 12/28. Contact: Annenberg/CPB Project, 1984 Solicitation, 111 16 St. NW, Washington DC 20036, (202) 955-5251.

● **MEDIA CONSULTING SERVICE:** Proposal coordination, script consultation, national marketing campaigns. Expert guidance for NEH, CPB, corporate & foundation proposals. Concept suitability, program design & proposal format for film, TV & radio projects; program & script development; promotion & advertising for completed films/programs/series. Highly experienced. Demonstrated results. Contact: Barbara Sirota Productions, (212) 777-6011, NY.

● **NEGATIVE MATCHING:** A&B rolls cut at reasonable rates. Contact: Bruce, (212) 228-7352, NY.

● **COE FILM ASSOCIATES INC.** handles sales of stock footage; CFA's library has over 7,000 titles w/more than 80 categories. Material shot on 16mm & 1" tape. Screening material available upon request. Contact: Mignon Levey or Susan Eenigenburg, (212) 831-5355, NY.

● **SUPER LOW COST EQUIPMENT RENTAL** service aimed at video artists creating multi-channel installations. Cost of equipment rented for long periods of time drastically reduced; minimum charge \$50/wk., ceiling \$400/month. Must complete application 1 month prior to installation. Contact: Locus Communications, (212) 757-4220, NY.

● **NEA—MEDIA ARTS GRANTS** deadline 9/14. For application form, write NEA—Media Arts, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20506.

● **NEW YORK STATE INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS' FELLOWSHIPS:** Artists' Fellowship Program of New York Foundation of the Arts will be awarding grants of up to \$5,000. Address inquiries to: Artists' Fellowship Program/NYFA, 5 Beekman St., NY, NY 10038, or call (212) 233-3900.

● **SUBMIT PROPOSALS** for Video Installations at the San Antonio Art Institute Gallery; proposal deadline 9/10. Contact: Robin Rosenthal, SAAI, PO Bx 6092, San Antonio TX 78209.

● **CONTEMPORARY ART TV FUND** to identify, commission, coproduce works w/artists using TV & video. Contact: CAT Fund, 955 Boylston St., Boston MA 02115.

● **AFI** will send info about 1985 cycle of its Independent Filmmaker Program upon request. Application

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● **CONGRATULATIONS** to AIVF winners of "Visions of US," a ½" video competition sponsored by Sony & administered by AFI. Ellen Stein & Betsy Newman were awarded second place in fiction, Nancy Meshkoff took first place in non-fiction & Shalom Gorewitz won first place in the experimental category. Winning tapes will be included in touring screening package to travel through major American museums.

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to AIVF member Julie Harrison, who has joined w/Susan Britton, Willoughby Sharp & Wolfgang Staehle to form Machine Language, a new company engaged in production, post production & distribution of programs for cable, broadcast, & closed circuit TV.

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to Lee Sokol for winning the Grand Prix at the 1984 Melbourne Film Festival for her experimental narrative *Aqui Se Lo Halla* and to Phyllis Bulkin for her award at the recent Zagreb international animation festival. ■



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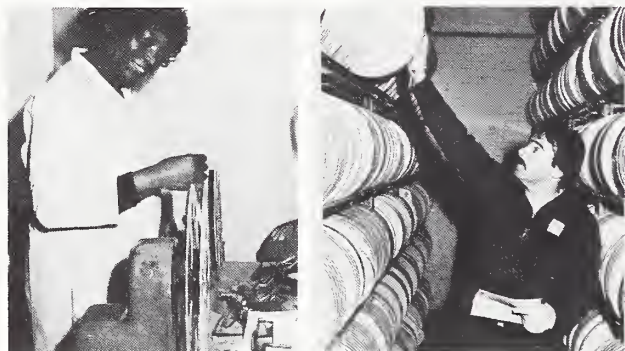
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# THE INDEPENDENT

OCTOBER 1984  
VOLUME 7, NUMBER 9

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**Cover:** What happens when major studios and independent filmmakers explore the same subjects? Andrea Estepa's article, "Seeing Double," looks at several such scenarios. Photos: Lynne Tillman and Sheila McLaughlin (*Committed*); Universal Pictures (*Frances*, inset). Cover design: Deborah Payne.

## LETTERS

### **Embassy Row**

To the editor:

I feel compelled to comment on Susan Linfield's article "How to Succeed in Distribution Without Even Signing" [*The Independent*, July/August, 1984], specifically regarding *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* and a number of points Ms. Linfield has mistakenly reported.

Although many filmmakers may feel that theatrical self-distribution is "exhausting, debilitating, and overwhelming," I cannot concur with that assessment in so far as was our experience with *Cortez*. It is the feeling of our staff that the distribution phase of *Cortez* was the most rewarding, and the most illuminating aspect of the entire venture.

Secondly, although certain antipathy did exist (*temporarily*) between our effort and that of Embassy Pictures, to leave the impression that this antipathy still exists is a great disservice to the entire effort. Embassy Pictures gambled on

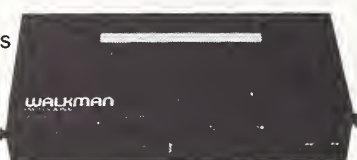
*Cortez* when every other distributor scoffed at the notion of releasing *Cortez* theatrically. Embassy provided us with the fundamental resources to make *Cortez* the commercial success that it is, and in the process provide us the opportunity to learn distribution firsthand. Embassy Pictures displayed great character in accepting our criticism, allowing for a "give and take" dialogue as to what was best for the film. Granted certain mistakes were made, for one our New York City opening, but it was not as cut and dried as Ms. Linfield's portrait. Embassy's choice was for a national breakout, and when the Cinema 5 organization made a generous offer Embassy took it. Had Janet Maslin seen the first 15 minutes of the film, which she missed, her regard for *Cortez* could have been favorable, and quite possibly could have been the difference between success and failure in New York City.

Third, and lastly, just how Ms. Linfield justifies her description of "the entire city of Los

(Continued on page 26)



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## Equal Opportunities from the Screen Actors Guild?

As more independents move from documentary to feature filmmaking, they face the new challenge of hiring and working with actors. They must also confront the question of whether or not to go union. The obvious advantage of using union actors is access to more experienced and professional performers. The costs of union contracts can put unsupportable pressure on the slim resources of most independent producers. Over the years, the Screen Actors Guild, in an effort to bring independents into the fold, has devised a number of special contracts designed to accommodate no-frills budgets. This summer was marked by SAG's introduction of a new contract formula available to low-budget producers, as well as tightened controls over an older agreement.

The first, an affirmative action incentive plan, offers producers the rare opportunity to receive a financial reward for socially responsible action. The plan originated last spring within SAG-L.A.'s Ethnic Equal Opportunity Committee (EEOC). It provides substantial breaks to low-budget producers who cast a minimum of 50% of all speaking roles and offer 50% of total days of employment to four groups of performers: women, minorities, the disabled and senior citizens, with 20% of all such roles going to "performers of color." According to the illustration cited in the original proposal, a film with a cast of 10 must employ five members from designated groups, two of which must be people of color, in order to qualify for the contract.

The financial incentives offered under this plan match those that SAG already grants to features budgeted under \$500,000: breaks on scale, deferment of overtime and premium pay, loosening of the rules on consecutive days of employment and the relaxation of weekend work rules. In practice, few producers have taken advantage of these low-budget breaks, because few features are made for less than \$500,000. To help encourage use of the affirmative action incentives, the new contract sets the budgetary ceiling at a more realistic \$1.5 million.

J.D. Hall, co-chair of the Hollywood EEOC and author of the proposal, stressed that the new contract is purely voluntary. "It's an incentive situation. It's a break for everybody. If producers take advantage of it, it will create work for the entire Guild, and will ensure that people covered under the affirmative action umbrella will get their share of the work generated."

Yet even as the SAG boards approved the affirmative action incentives, a contract controversy was brewing on another front. The point of contention is SAG's experimental film

agreement. Under this contract, films up to 15 minutes with budgets of no more than \$10,000 receive special treatment, including negotiable salaries and deferred payment. The deal is so attractive that a number of independents working on projects that exceed the guidelines have sought to hire SAG actors under this contract on the grounds that their films abide by the spirit, if not the letter, of the experimental agreement. And in a select number of cases, SAG has agreed.

When producer-director Spike Lee (*Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads*) went into preproduction on his new feature film this summer, he assumed that—based on the established precedent of exceptions to the rule, the success of his first film, and his status as a black filmmaker—his latest project would qualify for a special contract, despite its length and \$50,000 budget. He even selected his cast members from the SAG roster and rehearsed them for two weeks while awaiting the final word. SAG's New York EEOC had reviewed the project—the story of a young black messenger's effort to keep his lower middle-class family together—and unanimously recommended it for acceptance under the experimental film agreement. The decision came three days before shooting was to begin: despite the New York board, both the Chicago and Los Angeles boards deemed the film "too commercial." The contract was denied, and Lee found himself without a cast.

In an attempt to make sense of what seemed an arbitrary refusal, Lee requested from SAG a list of other films which had either received or been denied the right to work with union actors under the terms of the experimental contract. He was told that the list was confidential. However, Lee claims that exceptions have been made for a number of projects: Mark Rappaport's current production, *Chain Letter*; Stewart Bird's *Home Free All*, which went into theatrical release; and Rick King's *Hard Choices*, which will be screened at the Independent Feature Market this month.

"If these films were given the experimental contract, how can they possibly tell me that my film is 'too commercial?'" Lee asked. In a subsequent letter, sent at Lee's behest, to John McGuire, SAG's associate national executive secretary, AIVF's executive director Lawrence Sapadin argued that Lee's film is "unlikely to be a 'commercial hit' in the usual sense of the term. Unfortunately, the commercial media market still has no place for films dealing seriously or realistically with the lives of black people." Lee himself

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believes that it is a case of discrimination. He filed a complaint with the New York City Commission on Human Rights, which thinks Lee has a case and is prepared to pursue it. The matter may well end up in court.

Whatever the outcome of the court case, the controversy over Lee's film already has had repercussions that will affect relations between independent producers and the Guild. While Sapadin wrote McGuire that "SAG's return to a narrow reading of the experimental contract would be regrettable," this in fact seems to be the immediate result. Replying for McGuire, assistant executive secretary John Sucke informed Sapadin in a mid-August letter that "our Executive Committee has decided that the experimental contract should not be extended to any feature-length projects, no matter how experimental in nature." But on a potentially more conciliatory note, Sucke suggested the creation of an entirely new type of contract which would be available to films longer than experimental and more generously budgeted; a \$100,000 ceiling was offered as a starting point for discussion. —Debra Goldman

### Summer Summit

Independents emerged from last spring's public television negotiations with a national coalition and a new bargaining status in Washington. According to a House report to the Public Broadcasting Amendments Act of 1984, "The promise of public broadcasting as a service offering high quality, alternative programming fare aimed at enriching the cultural, informational and educational needs of the public is in large part attributable to the valuable input of independent producers."

With this recognition of independents' role in shaping public broadcasting programming, the House and Senate outlined specific issues to which the Corporation for Public Broadcasting should address itself or, in some cases, correct itself. Congressional staffpeople who were carrying the ball for independents on the Hill did not push for actual amendments to the statute—they didn't want to raise any red flags for conservative opponents to public broadcasting. But they did manage to articulate independents' concerns in key report language in commentaries that accompanied the bill. These guidelines can be a basis for oversight hearings if CPB fails to implement the spirit of the legislation.

What does it all mean to independents? First, both the House and Senate affirmed the exclusion of the *Frontline* series from the category of independent funding. However, Congress did not nail down a clear and explicit definition of independent production. Congress also affirmed the importance of the ongoing negotiations and consultation between independents and CPB.

"Both of these are important gains," said Lawrence Sapadin, executive director of AIVF, a key force in the independent's lobbying committee. "The *Frontline* issue establishes the principle that final edit is an essential element of in-

dependent production—a definition that goes beyond what the law requires. As for the negotiating role for independents, it is unprecedented, and puts us in a better position to influence CPB policy in the future."

The Senate reports went on to provide for a tightening of review panel practices, and affirmed the independent proposal on peer panels which had been nullified by the CPB Board in a controversial March Decision [see "CPB Turn-around Nixes Indie Agreement," *The Independent*, June 1984]. The report of the Committee on Commerce, Transportation and Science stated: "Panel members should be mutually ac-

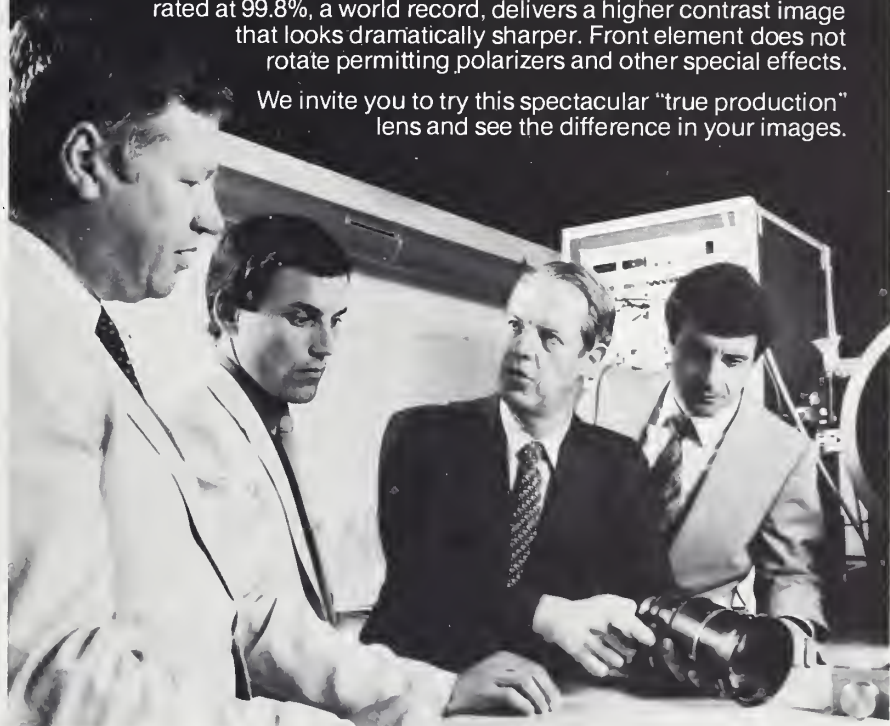
ceptable to CPB and independent producers, and should be representative of the public broadcasting community. The panel process should provide mechanisms whereby the panels can consider proposals that have been rejected by staff. Furthermore, producers whose proposals have been rejected by the staff or by the panels should receive written reasons for the rejection, if requested."

Despite these gains, a major disappointment was the failure of both houses to require a specific allocation of funds to independent and minority production. One ameliorative measure may be a supplemental funding bill due before

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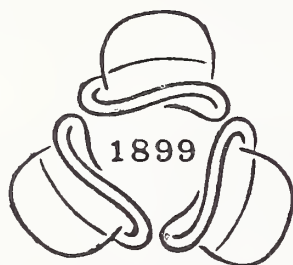
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Congress. If passed, Program Fund director Ron Hull has indicated that \$1-million of the fund will be stipulated for independents in the August '84 open solicitation round.

The negotiations with Congress and CPB were undertaken by a representative body of independent producers which, after several incarnations, was finally formalized as the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers. A seven-person Coalition team will continue to meet at least three times per year with CPB. At the July 24 meeting with Hull and the Program Fund staff, discussions focused on the panel process, the need for minority and women's programming, and broached the question of greater independent access to program distribution. The Coalition members discovered that CPB had already implemented a procedure for panelists to recall proposals that had been rejected by staff, but was less responsive to the Coalition's recommendations for standing review panels.

The Coalition will meet again with CPB on November 29. A key area of discussion will be reworking of a more favorable independent production contract with the Corporation.

—Renee Tajima

## The Duke Tries to Dethrone California PTV

California Governor George Deukmejian's opposition to any form of state funding for public broadcasting appears likely to receive an early September test, when Senate Bill 1284 reaches his desk for approval or veto. Sponsored by Fresno Democrat Ken Maddy and strongly supported by the Association of California Independent Public Television Producers (ACIPTP), SB1284 provides a funding structure for state support of public broadcasting. The product of a bipartisan commission appointed by the Governor, the measure includes a set-aside for independent producers of 10% of the public television allocation. At this point, the state's financial commitment is relatively small—\$200,000 of the \$2-million allocated for fiscal 1985. Still, if passed, the bill would mark the nation's most unequivocal legislative recognition of the importance of independent production to public television.

Earlier this summer Deukmejian blue-penciled, for the second year, funds for the California Public Broadcasting Commission (CPBC). That elimination was anticipated by public broadcasting supporters in the legislature. "They included that funding line to make clear to the Governor the depth and persistence of support for public broadcasting," said David Nagler, spokesperson for Californians for Public Broadcasting, the stations' lobbying arm. "We wanted to make it clear that unless some replacement for CPBC is designed, he'll have that albatross around his neck every year." Deukmejian has repeatedly stated that public broadcasting must seek its support from viewers, foundations, and corporations. "The Governor is a staunch believer in the First

Amendment," says Huston Carlyle, director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. "In his experience, state funding erodes freedom of the press, because when the state gives money, there are always strings attached."

Presumably, the Governor feels that corporate gifts come without strings attached. In any case, Carlyle made it clear that the Governor does not favor SB1284, even though the set-aside for independents might be viewed as support for the few true individual entrepreneurs remaining in broadcast media. Passage over the Governor's veto requires a two-thirds majority of both houses, a prospect Deukmejian's office deems unlikely. Chances of persuading the Governor to sign SB1284—or to allow it to become law without his signature—rest on stations' and independents' ability to reach the Duke through arguments other than those normally mustered in support of public broadcasting. One observer wryly suggested that the measure's only chance of success lay with the state's wealthy, Southern Californian, Republican independent producers—whomever they might be.

If, as seems likely, SB1284 dies at the Duke's desk, its significance is not entirely lost. It may serve as a model for legislation elsewhere, and will provide ACIPTP a foothold from which to operate during the next legislative session. SB 1284 also aroused the interest of several private foundations, which expressed interest in matching the state's commitment to independent production. Presently, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting allocates exactly one-third of a staff position to development of funding sources. Given the example set by independents' creative lobbying in California, CPB surely should undertake more thoughtful consideration of the seed potential of its vastly larger pot.

Of possibly greatest significance is SB1284's role in bringing independents and stations to the bargaining table. In contrast to last spring's experience in Washington—when CPB reneged on the agreement reached with representatives of a national coalition of independent producers prior to Congressional hearings on authorization and appropriations for public TV—stations and independents in California found they could support the same measure. In palmier times that sort of cooperation might be considered a sell-out by either side, but administration opposition in Sacramento and Washington leaves no room for rigid positions. California stations and independents appear to have learned that lesson. For the sake of larger interests, they've concealed (if not buried) the hatchet, a move that implies considerable political savvy.

—Fenton Johnson

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## **VIDEO FOR FILM**





This photo of an El Salvador rally helped Jim Friedman lose his job on the Ohio State faculty.

## OSU Sees Red

To those of us outside the ivory tower, life inside appears comfortable and placid. But universities are as fraught with political pressures as the rest of the world. Since such institutions are a breeding ground for the theories (and personal connections) which shape graduates' practices, university politics become significant. The recent, though not unique, restructuring of Ohio State University's Department of Photography and Cinema provides a sobering example.

The department employed 14 full-time faculty in 1983. It is one of the oldest in the country, conceived in the late nineteenth century as a service department within the College of Engineering. Cinema studies was introduced soon after World War II and, through the late 1960s, the department's primary function was the production of films for the university and other organizations; it did not offer majors or grant degrees until the early 1970s.

In 1978, Ron Green, then associate director of Media Study/Bufalo and now chair of the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers, was hired to chair the department. His mandate, according to filmmaker Carl Clausen, who taught in the department for over 20 years, was "to bring the department into the twentieth century." Upon arrival Green hired two people: Thomas Anderson and Claus Wyborny. Wyborny left after one year and was replaced by Noel Burch, filmmaker and author of *Theory of Film Practice* and *To the Distant Observer*. Burch departed after two years, reportedly in disgust with the events elaborated below. Allan Sekula, photographer, historian, and writer, began teaching photography at OSU in January 1981.

During the first two years of his administra-

tion Green initiated a public program, using department funds to bring in visiting contemporary photographers and filmmakers. Although the program soon became self-supporting through admissions and grants, the use of departmental money for such purposes became a point of internal contention. And in 1980 some of the older faculty revived the practice of an informal yearly review of the chair. Other complaints—that Green's method of administration was too loose, his handling of departmental finances too casual, and that he only hired Marxists—were also voiced at this first review. In response, Green made some compromises, including reinstituting a committee structure.

Shortly before the 1981 informal review, Clausen learned that Donald Glower, dean of the College of Engineering, was ready to get rid of Green and "his crowd." A senior faculty member, whom Clausen will not publicly name, told him that there were "already too many Jews on the tenured faculty... everyone coming up for tenure is a Jew... we need to restructure the tenure and promotion committee, or else Jews will take over the department."

At the same time, the participation of some department members in campus demonstrations against United States involvement in El Salvador added fuel to political tensions. A photograph of Sekula wearing a Reagan mask appeared on the front page of the student newspaper. Clausen says that Ali Elgabry, another photography and cinema faculty member, told him that this infuriated Glower—rich engineering alumni were complaining and the provost was talking about dissolving the department. Elgabry alerted Clausen, "Now the dean is ready to get Ron Green," and asked him to request a formal review of Green. Clausen refused.

Nevertheless, the question of a formal review of Green was brought up at the second meeting, and proceedings began the next week. Clausen met with Glower and was given the impression that Green's case was a lost cause; Glower told him that if Green didn't go, the department would be dissolved. Clausen says he felt he would also be removed if he spoke up.

In July 1981, Willie Longshore, another department member, was appointed vice-chair and given procedural powers. Longshore, who declined to be interviewed, immediately restructured the tenure and promotion committee, appointing only half the tenured faculty. He also changed Clausen's contract from 12 to nine months (thus effecting a pay cut) and told Clausen that he would no longer be able to make films for the department, as he had for 22 years.

Clausen feels this last move was particularly cruel in that, in addition to classroom courses, he taught film production to students assisting on films for clients—from first meetings through editing. Clausen was also stripped of committee duties and given an extremely heavy classroom teaching load. All this, Clausen believes, was the result of his refusal to "set up Ron Green."

In the fall of 1982, Longshore was appointed chair of the department. Jim Friedman, an assistant professor of photography who had taught at OSU since 1976 but was considered part of Green's "crowd," came up for tenure. Although he had watched quietly as Green was relieved of his duties, Clausen felt he must speak up at this point, and told the tenure and promotion committee of the anti-Semitic remarks, identifying the speaker. Nevertheless, the committee voted five to zero against Friedman, without, by its own admission, having attended his lectures or looked at his photographs. Friedman was twice a finalist for a distinguished teaching award at OSU.

Following university procedure, Friedman first appealed to the College of Engineering's tenure and promotion advisory committee. The appeal was rejected. Friedman next appealed to the university Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility. After extensive interviewing, the CAFR was unable to reach a conclusion on the charge of religious discrimination, but found five procedural errors in the handling of Friedman's case and recommended his appeal to the Faculty Senate Hearing Committee.

In the spring of 1984, the FSHC found that academic due process had not been served and recommended "an impartial reevaluation of Mr. Friedman's qualifications." However, the provost merely sent the case back to the Department of Photography and Cinema for a vote by all tenured faculty. The decision was seven to four against Friedman.

Meanwhile, Clausen had taken an early retirement in October 1983. Shortly thereafter Anderson, recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in filmmaking while at the university, came up for his fourth-year review, at which candidacy for tenure is decided. The committee voted four to two in favor of Anderson, but Longshore gave



him a negative review, and Glower denied tenure candidacy. Anderson appealed directly to the provost, heard nothing for four months, and eventually withdrew his appeal. No longer teaching, Anderson now concentrates on writing.

During the same period Sekula was offered a job as chair of the photography department at the California Institute of the Arts. Taking the hostile climate into consideration, Sekula accepted the job in California.

Over the past three years the Department of Photography and Cinema and its students have lost Anderson, Burch, Clausen and Sekula. Green was demoted. Friedman is currently suing the university for tenure, back pay and damages on grounds of anti-Semitism and violation of his civil rights. In effect, a department which had achieved critical mass has been atomized.

—Rebecca Lewis

*Rebecca Lewis, former assistant editor of Afterimage, is currently a publications project director for the Center for Arts Information.*

### **Collection Bargaining for Eastman Archives**

In Rochester, New York, George Eastman is the local hero—the most successful local entrepreneur ever. His business venture, the Eastman Kodak Company, put the town on the map. Kodak, now a corporate giant which dominates the world of photographic manufacturing, dominates the business and social scene at home as well. Eastman's marketing ingenuity has become myth, and since 1949 the mansion where he lived has been maintained as a monument. But the George Eastman House is also the International Museum of Photography, renown for its important collections of photographs, films, and photographic apparatus. The IMP/GEH photography holdings constitute one of the most important collections in the world and the film archive—some 5,000 films and two to three million film stills—ranks among the top three in the U.S., along with the Library of Congress and the Museum of Modern Art.

The schizophrenic identity of the Eastman House as a monument and museum finally provoked a crisis in late July, when the GEH board of trustees announced an agreement, in principle, to transfer the entire collection to the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian. The pivotal factor in the minds of the trustees is money. Despite Kodak's consistent contributions of \$1-million per year, the museum has been running in the red for the past few years. Museum director Robert Mayer predicts a \$400,000 deficit for 1984, reaching \$1.2 million by 1987. A \$300,000 shortfall in 1979 precipitated the firing of then-director Robert Doherty and 11 staff members, and access to the collections has been severely limited ever since. According to a study commissioned by the board, breaking even wouldn't meet the museum's needs: \$20-million is required to build proper storage and study facilities. Finding sup-

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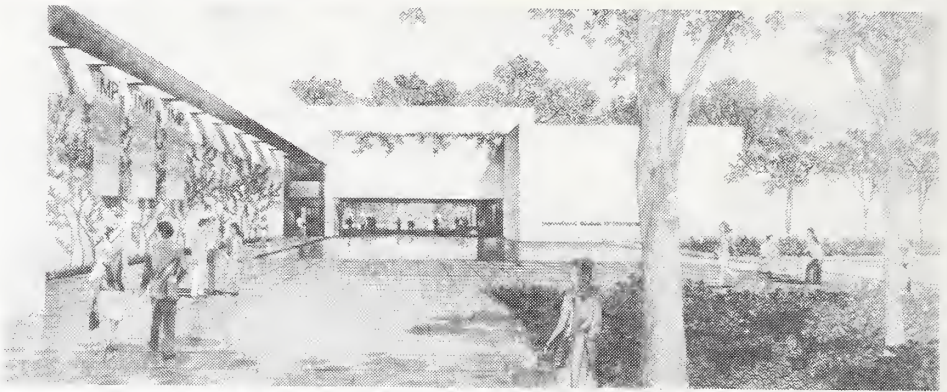
## PRINCIPLES & RESOLUTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION

### AIVF FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Association is a trade association of and for independent video and filmmakers.
2. The Association encourages excellence, commitment and independence; it stands for the principle that video and filmmaking is more than just a job—it goes beyond economics to involve the expression of broad human values.
3. The Association works, though the combined efforts of its membership, to provide practical, informational and moral support for independent video and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival of, and providing for, the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.
4. The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.
5. The Association champions independent video and film as valuable and vital expressions of our culture and is determined, by mutual action, to open pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

### AIVF RESOLUTIONS

1. To affirm the creative use of media in fostering cooperation, community and justice in human relationships without respect to age, sex, race, class or religion.
2. To recognize and reaffirm the freedom of expression of the independent film and videomaker, as spelled out in the AIVF principles.
3. To promote constructive dialogue and heightened awareness among the membership of the social, artistic and personal choices involved in the pursuit of both independent and sponsored work, via such mechanisms as screenings and forums.
4. To continue to work to strengthen AIVF's services to independents, in order to help reduce the membership's dependence on the kinds of sponsorship which encourage the compromise of personal values.



This proposed addition to George Eastman House to house its collection was abandoned in 1979.

port for that, the trustees determined, is not feasible.

Although the financial plight of the Eastman House has been no secret, the proposal to move the collections to Washington has provoked concern and even some organized opposition. Much of the outrage at the trustees' decision has centered on the photography collection, but the transfer has raised some doubts among film scholars and archivists as well. At the top of the list of questions is the fate of the volatile nitrate films in the GEH collection which have not yet been transferred to more stable stock. In the past, inadequate storage for nitrate films at the Eastman House has highlighted the urgency of the conversion project. A fire in 1978 destroyed 329 films in a vault near the museum's incinerator. And a few weeks ago, former film curator James Card told the press that he buried 300 reels in the Eastman House backyard for want of storage space. According to John Kuiper, director of film collections at GEH, those films were later exhumed and pronounced unsalvageable. Commercial masters of 90% of those films exist, he said, but none in study collections.

In recent years, however, the Eastman House has rescued some of its most valuable nitrate possessions. The funds that have allowed this work to continue have come primarily from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts/American Film Institute preservation program. This support would not be available to the Smithsonian; NYSCA will not fund an out-of-state archive, and one federal government agency cannot fund another. Eight million feet of nitrate in the Eastman vaults still await conversion, and at the current rate of one dollar per foot, the cost is staggering. Asked how the Museum of American History was planning to shoulder this burden without NEA/AFI aid, director Roger Kennedy replied, "I cannot give an answer," but, he added, "I understand the enormous importance of film preservation."

It is the Smithsonian's inexperience in this field that has some archivists worried. Eileen Bowser, curator of film at MOMA, for instance, wrote to the GEH Board, "I would be happier if I knew [the collections] were going to an archive where they knew how to store film." Bowser's concern has been reiterated by other members of the International Federation of Film

Archives, among them the organization's president, Wolfgang Klaue of East Berlin, and Jacques LeDoux, curator of the Belgian royal film archives. In an interview, Bowser pointed out, "Professional people in the field were not consulted" before the GEH trustees announced their intentions. And, she said, there are questions about the Smithsonian's commitment to film preservation, which "should be raised before the decision to move the collection is made."

Since New York State arts funding has been a mainstay of the GEH preservation budget (not to mention other museum programs) some protest might be expected from the NYSCA hierarchy and elected representatives in the state government. Not so. The official word from Governor Mario Cuomo's office is, "The governor's senior staff is watching the situation." The matter was discussed at the August meeting of NYSCA, where council member Andrew Wolfe, who is also chairperson of the GEH trustees, outlined the board position and plan. So far, NYSCA seems unwilling to object, although director of the Film Program, B. Ruby Rich, stated, "We're distressed at the loss of this archive to New York State."

Before the GEH archives can be given to the Museum of American History, a New York State Supreme Court justice must approve the transaction because GEH is licensed by the State Education Department. The State Attorney General can intervene, either for reasons of his own or on behalf of the Education Department. But even before the deal goes to court, the GEH board and Smithsonian regents must define and approve the precise terms of the agreement. At this stage, the trustees have appointed a negotiation committee.

Meanwhile, a new organization in Rochester is determined to stop the exodus of the collections from the city. Taking the name Photo Archives Belong In Rochester, the group has initiated a letter-writing campaign and is studying alternative sites, sponsors and building plans for a Rochester-based archive. Tom Frey, a member of the PABIR steering committee, attorney, and a member of the New York State Board of Regents, believes that separation of the collections from the GEH would enhance fundraising possibilities. "Polaroid and Fuji don't contribute," he explained. "The Eastman House is viewed, correctly or incorrectly, as Kodak's house



museum." Indeed, the prominence of Kodak executives on the GEH board has always guaranteed Kodak's interests. And Cynthia Hewett, another PABIR steering committee member, drew parallels between the GEH board's actions and Kodak's recent transfers of its collections in France and Great Britain.

To solidify its plan, PABIR needs to identify an established institution willing to adopt the archives; some suggested foster homes are the University of Rochester, the Rochester Institute of Technology, and the Strong Museum. PABIR's strategy also hinges on its assessment that a new archive building would cost \$5- to \$8-million, in contrast to the \$20-million GEH figure. Frey says that they will put their case before the GEH trustees prior to the Oct. 18 board meeting. However, the head of the trustees' *ad hoc* committee charged with devising a plan for the collections' future, Alexander Hargrave, sees the chances of finding an appropriate site in Rochester "unlikely." "It's easy," he said, "for someone to comment without knowing the extent of the undertaking." For his part, Kennedy assures, "The collection will get the attention it needs. We're not interested in doing this on the cheap."

Should the Museum of American History acquire the Eastman House treasure, its current caretaker, Mayer, has announced he will move with it. Kennedy will have scored a museum coup. Once divested of its archives, the Eastman House will remain a shrine to the founder of the Kodak empire. As Hargrave described the future, "Certain rooms will be restored in the style of the day of Mr. Eastman." And Kodak promises to continue giving \$1-million every year.

—Martha Gever

### FCC Deregulation: Is More Less?

If you happen to own ABC, CBS, or NBC, chances are you also own seven television stations—the maximum number allowed under Federal Communications Commission regulations. But if FCC chair Mark Fowler had his way, network owners could have bought as many TV stations as they desired.

In 1953, when television was still on its baby legs, the FCC sought to encourage diversity of broadcast ownership and adopted various regulations designed to achieve that end, including the 7-7-7 rule of broadcast outlet ownership, which stated that an individual or company was permitted to own only seven television stations, seven AM and seven FM radio stations. This year, the FCC sought to raise the broadcast outlet limit to 12, and also proposed a six-year "sunset" provision, wherein practically all regulations now in effect, including the temporary 12-station limit, would be eliminated by 1990.

But deregulation has many foes, including Congress, which last August voted to bar implementation of the FCC's requests until April 1, 1985. According to a Communications Committee source, Congress's actions will force the

FCC to substantially alter its original proposal and present its argument anew—after April 1. The expectation on Capitol Hill, said the source, is that the FCC revision will include neither the sunset provision nor the 12-station limit. Instead, the FCC may propose percentage of audience reach rather than flat numerical caps as the ownership criterion. Congressional sentiment, it seems, is that the networks are powerful enough.

When Fowler and company first announced their intention to deregulate by 1990, media analysts predicted that some large broadcasting companies would move to expand at the expense of smaller independent groups. "I think it's a serious, tormenting public policy question," said Jack Valenti, head of the Motion Picture Association of America, "to allow three networks to control the most pervasive force in this country, which is television."

Yet Fowler, the guiding force behind deregulation, said the FCC's 12-station proposal was "fully justified" as a "cautious" first step (toward deregulation). Indeed, Fowler has given a litany of responses to justify FCC actions. Asked about the fate of deregulation last August on the *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, he cited these justifications for deregulation: 1) It is better able to support "free television"; 2) The FCC wants to let smaller group owners get bigger so they can compete with the networks and afford to purchase programming; 3) Deregulation will enable group owners and networks to make higher quality news and public affairs programming more accessible to the public.

The regulations that the FCC is so eager to remove [including financial interest and syndication rules; see "Media Clips," *The Independent*, March 1984] have provided independents with greater access to programming and have somewhat chipped away at network dominance of the airwaves. If, after April 1, these regulations cease to exist, diverse programming provided by a variety of sources could conceivably become a thing of the past. After all, big bucks from big corporations will surely exert a big influence on the industry and could eventually shut out the smaller independent groups in contention for viewers. And Mark Fowler contends that deregulation will lead to greater diversity? Guess again.

—Claudia Gomez

### New York Fellowships Announced

The application deadline for film and video artists fellowships sponsored by the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) is October 22. According to NYFA program associate Malcolm Ryder, the fellowship grants, each of which is at least \$5,000, are meant for career development and will not be project-based, although each will include a public service provision for such activities as exhibitions, residencies, lectures and the like.

The fellowships are limited to New York State artists, and will be chosen based upon "excellence of the work," Ryder explained. The

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composition of artists' review panels for each discipline and an overall board of governors is still in the works.

The film and video disciplines are being treated as separate categories by the program. Former

Creative Artists Program (CAPS) winners will be eligible for the NYFA grants. For more information contact the Artists Fellowship Program, NYFA, 5 Beekman Pl., 6th fl., New York, NY 10038; tel. (212) 233-3900. —RT

## IN MEMORIAM

### Geri Ashur 1946-1984

Gerri Ashur—friend, teacher, filmmaker, wife, mother, editor. She was many things to many people, but everyone who knew her shared in some measure her incredible enthusiasm and passion for living. It is just those qualities—her energy, vitality, and zest—that makes her death hard to comprehend. They are also the qualities that helped her through a painful and horrible illness without self-pity.

Courage in the face of death is one of the last things Geri taught me, but there was much more throughout the years I knew her. She took me to my first mix, 14 years ago, and I did my first editing under her supervision. Even when she was no longer active in social documentary film, she screened the rough cuts of every film I worked on, always offering insightful advice and solutions. That was a role she delighted in and performed gladly for many independent filmmakers.

Gerri's appetite for film was as boundless and eclectic as her passion for food. She was one of the principal collaborators on *Make-Out*, a 1970 Newsreel film. The film was an unprecedented experiment for Newsreel, consisting of a high-school couple necking in a car with a sound track of overlapping layers of the girl's conflicting thoughts. Geri went on to direct, with Peter Barton and Marilyn Mulford, *Janie's Janie*, a seminal film in the early days of the women's liberation movement. It was the first of the women's films from that period to tackle the complex interrelations of class and sex in our

society. Geri made another film in 1976, a documentary portrait of the legendary folksinger and composer of "Freight Train," Elizabeth Cotton, called *Me and Stella*. Meanwhile, she turned her hand to fiction, working as a script collaborator and script supervisor, and had recently written three scripts of her own. She also continued working as an editor, becoming the pre-eminent dubbing editor for foreign language features. She prepared the English versions of *Scenes from a Marriage*, *The Last Metro*, and *1900*, among others. She also recently edited *When Women Kill*, an hour-long documentary about women in prison, directed by Lee Grant for Home Box Office.

Gerri is survived by her husband Richard Brick, filmmaker, production manager, and teacher at Columbia University film school, and her three-year-old son Noah who has inherited her energy, her capacity for love, and her dimples. All of us who were touched by her feel that the world is a smaller and poorer place without Geri.

Contributions in Geri's name may be made to the Geri Ashur Scholarship Fund, 10 Beach Street, New York, NY 10013. Funds will be used to give an annual grant to a young filmmaker.

A screening in Geri's memory of *Make-Out*, *Janie's Janie*, and *Me and Stella* will be held at the Museum of Modern Art in the Titus Theater II, 11 W. 53rd St., on Tuesday, Oct. 23rd at noon and again at 6 p.m.

—Deborah Shaffer

Photo: Richard Brick



Taj Mahal with the late filmmaker Geri Ashur during filming of *Me and Stella*.





Barbara Latham in the video department that she helped build at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

## Barbara Latham 1947-1984

On July 20 Barbara Aronofsky Latham died while undergoing treatment for leukemia in UCLA Hospital. Barbara was a major video artist whose work has been shown nationally at such places the Museum of Modern Art, P.S. 1, and the Everson Museum in Syracuse, N.Y. and internationally in Spain, Germany, Italy, and Holland. Since 1980 she had served as the chair of the video department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She worked with determination and enthusiasm to advance the status of independent video art by writing articles, serving on committees and panels, and jurying competitions.

She was on the board of directors at the Center for New Television in Chicago, where she headed a committee on program development, shaping policies which would be responsive to the needs of both artists and documentarians. By teaching workshops on topics like the history of video and curating shows, she helped expand the center's functions, contributing to its development as an educational cultural force, as well as an equipment access center.

She also contributed to the Chicago video community by bringing in nationally recognized video artists such as Barbara Buckner, Shigeko Kubota, and Bill Viola to teach workshops at SAIC. A dedicated teacher, she presented her students with a comprehensive range of information about technical and aesthetic issues. Under her direction, SAIC acquired a reputation for being one of the best equipped and conceptually advanced places to study video art.

In her own work, Barbara developed a unique blend of the formal aspects of video synthesis with content that was personal, narrative, and political. Often, her tapes were collaborations, because she did not believe in the rigid hierarchical delineation of roles characteristic of video production in standard studio situations.

*AliNation*, a tape made with John Manning and Edward Rankus in 1980, won awards at the Tokyo International Video Festival, the Chicago International Film Festival, and the Athens Video Festival. Using humorous and bizarre special effects, *AliNation* deals with the interface between institutional sterility, the repression of emotional spontaneity, and multimedia image bombardment in contemporary life.

Her most recent tape, *Consuming Passions* (1982), was an incisive critique of the relationships between the consumer's acquisition of objects and his or her assumption of an identity as an individual. In a feminist vein, *Chained Reactions*, our 1983 collaboration, used quotations from soap operas and Gothic novels in a context that ironically reversed the passivity of traditional female roles. The tape won a grant from the Illinois Arts Council; in 1983 Barbara also received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

It is unusual for someone who was only 36 years old to have accomplished so much and to have received so much recognition. But Barbara was never afraid to tackle projects which were ambitious or novel. Those whose lives she touched will remember how supportive she was of their ideas and ventures. She had a particular talent for mediating in difficult situations and for solving problems. Whomever and whatever she became involved with benefited greatly from her wise advice and prodigious energy.

—Christine Tambllyn

### OCTOBER SEMINARS

Friday, October 19, *The New School for Social Research*, 7:30 p.m.

**Point Counterpoint: Controversy by Television**

An examination of the visual rhetoric of television and the growing importance of political persuasion via the airwaves. Screenings will juxtapose "pro" and "anti" programming on issues ranging from nuclear power to abortion. Programmed and presented by Peter Broderick. Co-sponsored by the American Film Institute.

Friday, October 26, *The New School for Social Research*, 7:30 p.m.

**Access to New York: Cable in the Outer Boroughs**

A "town meeting" which will bring together Independent producers, community activists and public access officials to discuss strategies and exchange ideas on the new access scene in the boroughs. With Stuart Dombor, Queens Public Communications Corporation; Michael Schwartz, Bronx Borough President's Office; Irwin Steinman, Staten Island Access Corporation; and Nanette Rainone, Brooklyn Borough President's Office. Chuck Sherwood of the Metro Chapter of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers will moderate.



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"Fury is a Feeling Too," 1983  
"The Blue Distance" &  
"Breakfast of the Hyena," 1983,

Sun., Nov. 4 8:00 p.m., Collective  
"With Eyes Fixed on the Money,"  
1982

Mon., Nov. 5 6:30 p.m., Goethe House  
"Straight Through the Heart," 1983  
(preview, courtesy of New Line  
Cinema)

Fri., Nov. 9 6:30 p.m., Goethe House  
"Calamity Jane, Letters to Her  
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## FIELD REPORT

# Access Defenders Arm Against Goliath

DIANA AGOSTA and CARYN ROGOFF

The seventh annual conference of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, held from July 19 to 21 in Denver, included 800 participants who discussed all forms of community programming—local origination produced by cable operators; public, government, and educational access; as well as leased access. Many participants hailed from small towns and cities in the U.S. where public access cable channels provide a vital and active community resource. The group ranged from access managers and cable company representatives to media activists and independent producers. Entitled "Community Programming: Managing the Hidden Resources," the conference offered workshops in nine tracks, a satellite teleconference, tours of local cable studios, the Hometown USA awards, equipment and program exhibits, and tape screenings.

This report will concentrate on public access, since this still provides the most unrestricted outlet for independent work on cable TV. Public access programs cannot be censored, and time (sometimes equipment and studio facilities, too) is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Production opportunities vary, depending on the terms of a particular franchise agreement and provisions of local governments. Some access centers provide training in basic production skills; indeed, many centers are now staffed by former independent producers who cut their teeth on public access. And despite the constant struggle to defend and expand public

access activity, the growth rate of these centers is impressive—from 20 to 2,000 in the past 10 years.

Community TV's diversity of subject matter and format became evident at the annual Hometown USA awards ceremony. Over 40 programs were chosen from some 700 entries in such categories as documentary, narrowcast, sports, video art, live programming and children's production. Tapes screened at the conference included *Will It Be You?*, which includes excerpts from a labor history play staged in Oregon about a local longshoreman's strike in 1934, intercut with reactions of union members in the audience and recollections of some community residents. Another successful tape recorded a lively Board of Education meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where school district officials consciously played to their TV audience. The thread common to all these shows was the local sensibility particular to each production. As Kathleen Hulser pointed out in the workshop "What Are the Real Quality Issues?," familiarity with an environment and an understanding of a local event usually result in a refreshing view of reality, compared to the visual cliches prevalent in mass media.

Despite the innovation and resourcefulness which community programming has nurtured, many access organizations remain in tenuous positions, operating with annual budgets that couldn't fund a major PBS documentary. As the industry moves from "the glitter of fran-

chising and the slogans of marketing to the bottom line of management," NFLCP chair Margie Nicholson explained, advocates of access and community programming must face the difficult task of proving their worth to cable operators, government officials on all levels, and to the public. One of the major problems tackled at the conference, therefore, was how to defend access against local cable operators who view access and community programming as a questionable expense. Negative stereotypes about access—"nobody watches," "it's just vanity TV," "it's bad quality"—were countered by information on effective production techniques, public relations, viewer surveys and other efforts designed to convince wary cable operators.

Often—as in a workshop on "The Future of Community Programming"—the first question asked was, "How can we develop programming when they keep cutting us back?" Victor Livingston, editor of *Cablevision* magazine, offered a pointed reply: "Cable corporations pay attention to publicity, and cable press doesn't often hear from community programmers." Lyn Yeager of Viacom noted that access and community programming were usually promised during the franchise bidding process in order to make an attractive offer, but are maintained because they improve the company's image in the eyes of local government. She added that Viacom had only three systems with access three years ago and now has community programming in nearly three-quarters of its franchises. Several speakers also pointed out the cable corporations' search for ways to expand by reaching defined target audiences, another advantage of community programming. But, as Sue Miller Buske, NFLCP's executive director, reminded the group, cable companies need a lot more education.

In his keynote address to the conferees, Steve Suitts, president of the Atlanta Media Conference and chair of the Citizens' CATV Board in Atlanta, stressed that strong coalitions of community organizations and institutions are necessary for the preservation of public access on cable TV. Describing public access on cable television as the most important technological advancement for free speech in this century, he compared its potential to its current reality: "We can no longer avoid the fact that public access and local origination are in jeopardy today, in large part, because there aren't enough people who would feel deeply the loss of this source of programming." And he challenged the audience to produce local cable programs that better serve the interests of those who are its natural audience—those who are underserved and often underrepresented by traditional broadcasting and satellite programming. Suitts likened the concept of public access to the public library system: both are open to the public without charge, both are institutions whose value to the community is greater than the number of people who walk through the doors. That value is diversity.

Cooperation between independent producers and public access centers can add to the desired



High fashion for cable lovers from the Fayetteville Open Channel Newsletter.



## Attention:

University Community Video, a non-profit access, education, and exhibition/distribution center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has just been awarded a programming contract from MTN/Rogers Cable. They have money!! For further information contact: Neil Sieling, Exhibition Coordinator, 425 Ontario St., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55414; tel. (612) 376-3333. They are looking for programming material of all types.

diversity of cable TV, but tensions between access producers and cable company managers are not unknown. At several workshop sessions, managers attested to the value and quality of independent work while expressing fears that access centers are being or will be used as free equipment and editing centers by producers with little sincere interest in access, at the expense of the general public. In a workshop on "Independent Producers and Their Relationship to Access Centers and Budgets," Fred Johnson of the Cincinnati Access Project declared, "The bottom line of access is to democratize information, not to create a class of producers." Such suspicions voiced by access staffers, however, were accompanied by blueprints for establishing equitable relationships with independents on issues like rights to income received from cablecast (although no one in the room had actually realized substantial distribution profits), copyright, outside funding and access to equipment. Most managers concurred that independents could contribute to the access effort by teaching workshops and using access newcomers on production crews.

The managers, though, reminded independents of the producers' benefits from access. In Michigan, for instance, the statewide access operation provides distribution, thereby enhancing producers' fundraising potential. In Austin, Texas public access commands a larger local audience share than the PBS station, thus provid-

ing credibility for independents. Nonprofit access centers also serve as funding umbrellas for local independent producers. And some access systems even make grants to access producers; in Tucson, for example, \$190,000 for grants—\$10,000 maximum—is allocated in the annual access budget. Clearly cordial relations between cable companies and independents can be encouraged by such measures, to the advantage of both groups.

The most serious conflict affecting community programming advocates—producers, access managers and community groups—centers on recent actions by the National Cable Television Association, the trade organization of the cable industry, the Supreme Court, and the Federal Communications Commission. The growth and activity evident at the conference may suggest a promising future, but an unpredicted twist in the 20-year struggle to draft and pass national cable legislation clouded the conference proceedings. Subsequent developments have only confirmed speculations that the legislation and its provi-

sions for some local control of cable TV were in trouble.

The current battle began in 1980 when Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) detached an amendment on cable from proposed telephone legislation. Goldwater subsequently introduced S-66, a bill strongly supported by the National Cable Television Association, which the Senate passed in 1983. But a version sponsored by Representative Tim Wirth (D-CO) was stalled in the House following strong opposition from major cities, public interest and media organizations including AIVF, and the NFLCP. These groups maintained that the bill improperly and severely limited the power of cities to negotiate and enforce cable service for their localities. During the past year, Representative John Dingell (D-MI), chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, facilitated meetings between the NCTA, the National League of Cities, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, culminating in a compromise bill, HR 4103, drafted last June. NFLCP supported the bill, which was expected to go to the House floor in July.

But the Supreme Court's July ruling in *Capitol Cities v. Crisp*, which broadens the FCC's authority to regulate cable, stopped the bill's progress through the legislative channels. The NCTA withdrew its support for the compromise, insisting on modifications which favor the cable industry. The NCTA's turnaround on HR 4103 is based on the Court's interpretation

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of the FCC's rule that all local broadcast signals must be carried on cable systems; specifically, in *Crisp* the Justices ruled that an Oklahoma state law barring liquor ads on cable TV is superseded by FCC regulations. The opinion, written by Justice William Brennan Jr., further stated, "If the FCC has resolved to preempt an area of cable TV regulation and if this determination represents a reasonable accommodation of conflicting policies that are within the agency's domain, we must conclude that all conflicting state regulations have been precluded."

In response to the Court's decision, the

NCTA embraced a new hope for escaping local regulation, placing its bets on the deregulatory fever now infecting the FCC. And, feeding the NCTA's optimism, in two recent rulings the FCC implemented a broad interpretation of *Crisp*. In its *Miami* decision, the FCC prohibited cities from imposing fees greater than five percent of a cable company's annual revenues to fund public access or to be applied to purposes unrelated to cable. In July, the agency reaffirmed its *Nevada* ruling, which restricted local regulation to "basic" cable services. An FCC attorney, quoted in the July 25 issue of *Broad-*

*casting* magazine, explained his agency's reading of *Crisp*: "... the opinion suggests we [can] do anything we want to regulate cable in the public interest"; this means that the FCC has assumed the authority to preempt state and local regulation.

The NFLCP says that the FCC's interpretation of *Crisp* is overly broad and that the Court's decision is limited to specific issues. Paul D'Ari, an NFLCP staff member and managing editor of *Community Programming*, says the main question is the extent to which local government can tamper with distant sig-

## Hard Times in Rogers' Neighborhood

Media activists seeking to demonstrate the potentials of local cable programming often point to the commitment of Rogers Cable-systems in East Portland, Oregon. The franchise has all the ingredients for a successful local programming effort: a sympathetic management, eight local origination (LO) channels staffed with full-time producers, a mobile production van, and active, independently-run public access studios. Most remarkably, the operator has actually *paid* independent producers for airing their work as part of two regional series packaged by Portland's Media Project, Inc. (MPI) [see *The Independent*, September 1982]. These efforts have won the company the goodwill of area producers, a fistful of ACE awards (cable's version of the Emmy), NFLCP honors, and a reputation as one of the most enlightened multi-systems operators (MSO) in the business.

Goodwill, however, does not pay the bills, and Rogers Cable-systems apparently has a lot of expenses. In midsummer, the operator sent a letter to Portland's cable commissioners, informing them it was \$3.2 million in the red for the current operating year, and announcing its intention to seek changes in its contract with the city. At the same time, Rogers outlined a proposed remedy for its anemic cash flow—a mixture of new marketing strategies, franchise fee reductions, subscriber rate increases and cost-cutting. Local origination and public access are at the front of the line to the fiscal chopping block. LO stands to lose \$375,000, while public access funds will be reduced by \$170,000. In each case these cuts amount to half of the current budgets.

Rogers requested that the city review the changes by September 1, but at press time, no action was expected until early this month. Nevertheless, LO and access producers are already feeling the pinch. Portland Cable Access (PCA), the city's independent access facilitator, was days away from beginning work on the last of three video facilities mandated by the franchise agreement when Rogers informed the organization it was not going to meet its contracted July 15 payment

to the PCA. On the LO side, eight members of the in-house staff, including one producer, received their pink slips this summer. These layoffs will make way for the reduction of LO's channel allotment from eight to three. One of the slots doomed to extinction is devoted to the arts; it will be absorbed by the mixed-bag flagship channel, PCTV. Simultaneously, its budget will plummet from \$20,000 to zero. To make up for the lost funds, Ed Geis, Rogers' arts coordinator, plans on turning to sponsored programs, a move which will necessarily affect the type of programming produced. "There will still be arts programming, but there will be a greater orientation toward entertainment," he said. "We're going in the same direction as ABC's ARTS," a satellite service which died and was reborn as the Arts and Entertainment Network early this year.

Media Project's two "harbinger of the future" cable series, *Media Mix* and *Image Crossing Northwest*, are also likely to become relics. "We had no long-term contract with Rogers," says MPI's Karen Wickre. "Each series was a one-shot, arranged on good faith." These unique deals not only included payments to producers, but a promotional commitment from Rogers and administrative support money for MPI. But Wickre feels that the chances for a third series are slim. "We've been told to write letters to the cable commission, saying how much we want this kind of programming," she says. "Beyond that there's nothing much that we can do right now."

In theory, Rogers cannot implement any of these cost-saving measures without city approval. A special committee, which includes an independent financial analyst, has been formed to evaluate Rogers' current fiscal condition. Meanwhile, public sentiment has been running against Rogers, as demonstrated by an editorial in the Portland daily, *The Oregonian*, calling for the city to stand fast on the contract. Paul Steele, general manager of PCA, reports that at an August meeting of the city's cable commission, the company "really got bashed around." The commissioners were par-

ticularly incensed by Rogers' refusal to pay its required public access contribution. "I think the non-payment damaged their credibility," observes Steele. "It was a very politically insensitive move, and I'm sure it's not going to help Rogers when the city takes up these contract changes."

The anger of many local residents is fueled by the suspicion that Rogers has mismanaged the franchise. The East Portland system is on the cutting edge of cable technology, possessing full interactive capability. Over the past year the operator has been going through the expensive process of replacing its old subscriber converter boxes with more sophisticated and costly two-way converters. Unfortunately, all those magical services—home banking, home shopping, wagering, and pay-per-view—which were going to make two-way cable such a bonanza have not materialized. At the same time, Rogers' marketing efforts have been less than successful. In the company's mid-July report, Rogers stated that it has signed up 45,000 subscribers out of a home market of potentially 110,000, a full 15,000 fewer than the "worst case scenario" it constructed at the time the franchise was won.

"I just don't think Rogers has done a very good job telling people what cable is all about," comments Wickre. "There's a tremendous amount of confusion about interactive [video], about what's available through cable, about interconnect with the city's other systems." The franchise area, she also noted, is not situated in the wealthiest part of town, and many of its residents are senior citizens who are relatively immune to the romance of high tech. But Rogers' critics point out these conditions were known to the company when it first made its pitch to the city. Is the current crisis in Portland another example of franchising teams promising goodies that day-to-day system managers cannot hope to deliver? If Portland decides not to budge on the contract, does it have the muscle to make Rogers fulfill its obligation? Finally, if an operator as sympathetic to local programming as Rogers is capable of sacrificing that commitment to the bottom line, what can local producers hope from less congenial MSOs?

—Debra Goldman



nals—satellite or nonlocal broadcast signals. According to D'Ari, this does not expand the FCC's domain. Michael Myerson, a communications lawyer and coordinator of the New York Citizens Committee for Responsible Media, agrees. In a discussion following the conference, Myerson noted that the *Crisp* decision stressed the FCC regulatory goals intended to increase program diversity and provide universal service. Thus, he believes, the case does not allow the FCC to preempt regulations which promote the same ends, such as local access requirements.

Now seeing its interests reflected in *Crisp* and the FCC moves, however, the NCTA is waffling on HR 4103, demanding a rewrite incorporating new provisions concerning rate regulations, franchise fees, franchise renewals and consumer access (that is, access to buildings or tenants served by a competing cable operator providing "the same" service). And behind this push for relaxation of local regulation lies another major goal of the industry: a redefinition of the First Amendment rights of cable operators. The operators contend that the vast number of channels available on cable likens their public role to that of newspapers and other print media, and, therefore, no regulations should be imposed on the content they carry.

The NFLCP takes an opposing position on the First Amendment issue, arguing that a cable system operates a *de facto* monopoly, utilizing locally owned rights of way. The analogy favored by the NFLCP is that of broadcasting (although, of course, broadcasters are now demanding revision of the Fairness Doctrine and the Reagan FCC seems inclined in the same direction), where regulation in the public interest—a principle based on the 1934 Communications Act—is considered constitutional. NFLCP's support for cable legislation is derived from the same principles: cable is an essential information technology and public resource which should serve the public interest; governments, therefore, hold the authority and responsibility to develop public communications policy. This responsibility includes negotiation and enforcement of cable franchises on behalf of citizens. In its support for the current version of HR 4103, the NFLCP emphasizes certain provisions, especially the authority of local governments to mandate public, educational, and government access to channel space and local jurisdiction over negotiation and enforcement of franchise provisions related to access services, facilities, and equipment.

The threat to public access implied by the NCTA maneuvers, backed by an apparently sympathetic FCC, leaves the future of community programming in limbo. Judging from the NFLCP conference, however, the champions of community programming seem prepared to defend what they have so carefully built. ■

*Caryn Rogoff and Diana Agosta are independent producers who also produce public access series in NYC. Rogoff founded and produces Not-For-Profit-TV, and both are members of the Paper Tiger TV production collective.*

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# SEEING DOUBLE

Studios and Independents—  
Same Subjects, Different Films

ANDREA ESTEPA

IN HOLLYWOOD, INTANGIBLE STORY IDEAS are trafficked as commodities, often with high pricetags. In the recent past, a trend of sorts has become evident: major studio productions on subjects similar to previously released independent films. To be fair, there have also been a number of simultaneous productions. If there's an idea in the air, it's not surprising that both an independent and a studio pick it up. In either case, this phenomenon can be frustrating to the independent filmmakers involved, since release of even an unsuccessful Hollywood film with a particular theme can bar an independent production, which is now deemed redundant, from commercial theaters. The differences, though, are often as pronounced as the similarities. Independents usually value their independence, i.e., their personal commitment to a chosen subject and to unconventional treatments generally disdained or ignored by the corporate culture industry. In a comparison between a Hollywood product and an independent film which share a common subject, the independent work may receive critical compliments while Hollywood gets the profits.

Ironically, a successful independent film merely signals to the majors that there's money to be made on a certain idea, and they should hop on the bandwagon as soon as possible. Although a Hollywood follow-up will not

always take a different point of view than its independent forerunner, it will predictably be blander. The process of commercialization involves pleasing, or at least not offending, the largest possible audience. As a result, the political or cultural strength of a subject portrayed in an independent film will most likely become distorted or nullified if a studio decides to do it bigger, though not necessarily better.

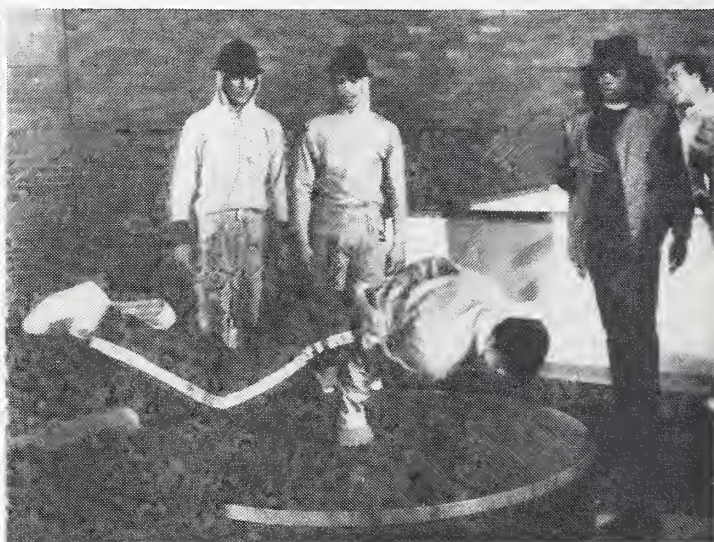
DIRECTOR CHARLIE AHEARN BELIEVES that his *Wild Style* and the plethora of hip-hop films that have followed in its wake (two, *Breakin'* and *Beat Street*, are currently in distribution, and six more are in varying stages of production) is probably the most dramatic example of the remake phenomenon. *Wild Style*, according to Ahearn, is an example of "what we'd like to believe is true—independents being closer to the subject matter and pioneering for the industry." When Ahearn started working on the film in June 1980, few people outside the South Bronx had heard of break-dancing, and graffiti could be found on subway cars, not in art galleries.

While trying to raise production funds, Ahearn found that he didn't get applause for breaking new ground. The Television Lab at

WNET, the New York City public TV station, told him that while the subject might be appropriate for a local, magazine format program, it would not be appreciated outside the city. And the Corporation for Public Broadcasting took Ahearn's intended portrayal of a cultural renaissance in the South Bronx as a joke. "They sent me this insulting letter that basically said, 'So, you think this stuff is art?'" Production money eventually came from West Germany's ZDF, Britain's Channel Four, and private investors.

Although *Wild Style* was completed in the summer of 1982, it wasn't theatrically released in the U.S. until November 1983. This time lag frustrated Ahearn because, in the interim, *Flashdance* beat *Wild Style* into the theaters. Having *Flashdance*'s break-dancing sequence hailed as the first ever on film was especially annoying because Ahearn knew that representatives of Paramount, *Flashdance*'s studio, had seen his film at the Independent Feature Project's market in September 1982—before *Flashdance* was completed. In fact, all of the majors borrowed a print of *Wild Style* at some point before its release, telling Ahearn they were interested in him as a director. But he perceives other motives: "Either they had decided to make a hip-hop film and were looking for specific ideas, or they were thinking about it in a general way and *Wild Style* gave them the push they needed." In the long run, however, *Flashdance* probably helped *Wild Style* more than it hurt because it added break-dancing to the national vocabulary and whetted the public's appetite for more: "If we had come completely cold to the U.S. outside of New York, it would have been much harder. You don't want to be too far in advance of the public because you then have to work too hard to get people interested. On the other hand, people get jaded pretty quickly—particularly with something like this where the freshness and the newness are what you want to show."

*Wild Style* has been extraordinarily successful



Charlie Ahearn's fresh feature on hip-hop (l) inspired more than a few Hollywood break dance clones—like *Beat Street* (r), which, Orion Pictures says, "deals with the despairs, dreams and triumphs that signal the exciting new hip-hop culture."

Courtesy First Run Features

Photo: Michael Ginsburg



by independent standards—theatrical distribution in most American cities, three months on *Variety*'s chart of the 50 top grossing films in the country—but peanuts compared to the business *Beat Street* did last summer. According to Janet Cole of First Run Features, *Wild Style*'s distributor, you can't compare the profits of a low-budget independent film with those of a Hollywood production. "We're not talking about which is best aesthetically; we're just talking numbers. And the numbers reflect the success of the promotion." When First Run acquired *Wild Style* they knew that the first two Hollywood hip-hop films were in the works, so it became a race against the clock to get Ahearn's film into the theaters first. They did it. "By the time the others came out," says Cole, "we had played off the bigger cities." Undoubtedly, this contributed to *Wild Style*'s box office take; Ahearn's film would never have been able to vie head-on with its Hollywood competition for the youth market. "The audience all these films were aimed at was not the most critical, sophisticated audience," notes Cole. "Teenagers don't read reviews: it's the publicity that's going to get them to the theater."

Box office competition aside, *Wild Style*'s gritty, urban realism distinguishes the film from its commercial counterparts. It has the look of a film made to be seen by the people portrayed: it can't romanticize them too much, because they won't buy it. Basing his script on the everyday activities of his rapping, graffiti-writing, break-dancing cast, Ahearn was able to present a vision of art as an integral and transformative part of daily life, a vision of a vital culture; breaking and writing are sources of pride and pleasure in an environment where there's not much else to shout about. Ahearn neither exploits nor romanticizes this South Bronx locale. The startled reactions and alien presence of the downtown journalist, played by Patti Astor, reinforces the squalor. But we don't see prostitutes and drug dealers peering out of every doorway as in most Hollywood depictions of the neighborhood which has become a code word for the ghetto in the '80s.

In comparison, *Breakin'* attempts to make hip-hop palatable to a mainstream American audience, divorcing the music and dance style from the milieu that spawned it. Lest middle America be intimidated or turned off by too many teenage black and Latino men on the screen, *Breakin'* moves the action to Venice, California. The lead character is a white jazz-dancing heroine who discovers breaking and becomes an evangelist for the form. Breaking is no longer a means of expression for a particular culture but fun for everyone. White folks, get down!

*Beat Street* walks a fine line between *Wild Style*'s realism and *Breakin'*'s whitewash. Here, the location is again the South Bronx; the protagonists are black and Hispanic, and the excitement the dancing, the graffiti, and the rapping add to their lives is captured. But the negative aspects of ghetto life aren't toned down, as in *Wild Style*—they're eliminated. There's no sex, no drugs, certainly no knives. The graffiti artist is the only character whose activities are at all



*Rosie the Riveter*'s unique tale became just another Hollywood love story in *Swing Shift*.

questionable—his art is illegal and frequently dangerous. In a melodramatic twist at the end of the film, the character pays dearly for straying from respectability. *Beat Street* appreciates graffiti art without encouraging "vandalism."

**D**ESPITE THE WAY AHEARN'S FUNKY urban realism has been sanitized in *Breakin'* and *Beat Street*, the three films still look like members of the same family. All focus on the energy and talent of the actual breakers who appear in leading roles. Usually, a Hollywood remake of an independent production will depart radically from the original. Take, for example, the gulf between Warner Brothers' *Swing Shift* and its forerunner, Connie Field's documentary *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*.

After attending a "Rosie the Riveter" reunion in the mid-'70s, Field decided to make a film about women who entered the industrial workforce during World War II and were laid off when men returned home from the battlefields. Field's background in women's history and involvement in the early days of the women's movement in Boston led her to this film project and aided her research: "Scholars were just getting to the material at the same time I was. There were no secondary sources yet." It took Field about three and a half years to complete the documentary, including two years looking at newsreel footage and interviewing hundreds of women.

While working on the film, Field heard that screenwriter Nancy Dowd, who had written the screenplay for *Coming Home*, was working on a script for a narrative film on the same subject. But by the time *Rosie* was complete, the Hollywood project had been shelved—the studios decided that there wasn't a sufficiently large au-

dience for Dowd's story. Then *Rosie* premiered at the 1980 New York Film Festival to great critical acclaim. According to Field, "The studios started calling me, asking to see *Rosie*. Most wouldn't say why they were interested, although one or two said that they were interested in me as a director, that they were always looking for new talent. I didn't give out the film. I felt they could at least pay me a rental, but I later found out that the Academy [of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences] had given Universal a print without my permission." Field refused to share her film with the studios because she had hopes of using her research as a means of getting some input into the *Swing Shift* project. "I tried to influence it," she says, "because I knew I wouldn't be making it, and I wanted it to be good."

After Jonathan Demme was named director of *Swing Shift*, Field met with him and found him "amenable. He was interested in using my sources. He was even interested in using Lola Weixel [one of the real-life "Rosies" featured in Field's film]. I don't blame Demme for anything that happened. Ultimately, he didn't get to do what he wanted either." (After Demme turned in his final cut to Warner, additional footage was shot and the film re-edited, apparently a condition imposed by the film's lead, Goldie Hawn. Demme disowned the film as a result.) Field thinks *Swing Shift* suffers from its historical inaccuracies: "I knew the story line wouldn't work, and I tried to communicate that to the studio via Demme. The love story, the affair, was a stereotype: leave a woman alone, and she'll immediately start fucking another man." Pointing out the irony in these distortions, Field comments, "*Rosie* is about how the media creates and perpetuates myths, and that's exactly what *Swing Shift* does. Goldie Hawn gave an interview during the filming where she said that World War II was a time of sexual liberation as



well as liberation in the workplace. Lola Weixel wrote her a letter after that saying, 'You're a little misinformed—there were no men around, just really old men and a few 4Fers.'

In fact, *Swing Shift*'s message directly contradicts *Rosie*'s. Field's film peeled away layers of government propaganda to show the backward movement of social change imposed by economics and ideology. At the end of the war women were asked to forget what they'd learned about themselves: that they were capable in ways they had never imagined, and that their relationships with men didn't have to be based on dependence. The fictionalized *Swing Shift*, on the other hand, only hints at its heroine's increasing ability and self-confidence—when she gets a promotion at the factory, for example. Hawn's wartime job, like her lover, is a temporary distraction while there's no husband and hearth to tend, and she unquestioningly accepts the loss of lover and job when hubby returns. The "and-they-lived-happily-ever-after" finale affirms, rather than contests, the assumption that women's natural place is in the home. *Rosie the Riveter* leaves the viewer with feelings of righteous indignation, anger, and pride in women's accomplishments; *Swing Shift* leaves indifference.

"What amazes me," remarks Field, "is that Hollywood is interested in making money, yet they completely ignore a documentary that's been a 'hit.' *Rosie*'s success was market research for *Swing Shift*: they picked it up because the documentary was successful. It astounds me that the only thing they took from my film were the newsreels." Field is disappointed, not just because *Swing Shift* was a disappointing film, but because she knows that because of *Swing Shift*'s commercial failure, no one else will be able to raise the money to make another feature

on the subject. Even Jack Kroll of *Newsweek* agrees that it was the approach and not the material that made *Swing Shift* a loser: "*Swing Shift* might make a nice study of how some movie projects are blanded out.... Connie Field's 1980 documentary brought back that moment when women became the muscle of American industry and then were sent back home. *Swing Shift* largely blows its chance to capture the real poignance and irony of the moment."

WHATEVER PROBLEMS AHEARN encountered competing with Hollywood or Field faced when she tried to rescue a subject she cared about from Hollywood clichés, they shared one source of satisfaction: their films had been firsts and, as such, have reached a sizable audience. What happens when the independent film isn't first? What's the effect of discovering, as you work on your low-budget 16mm project, that a Hollywood studio is producing a movie with a similar storyline?

A good example is *Private Benjamin*, the 1980 Warner Brothers release about an idle, wealthy young woman who decides to make something of her life by joining the army. The film beat Nick Broomfield and Joan Churchill's documentary about women in basic training, *Soldier Girls*, to the screen by a year. According to Broomfield, it was coincidental that work on their film commenced at about the same time Warner Brothers put *Private Benjamin* in motion. The idea for the documentary was triggered by a visit they'd made to Columbia, South Carolina. Among postcards of women being trained at the army base there, they found a picture of a group of women with huge grins on

their faces bayonetting stuffed dolls. "That image was so full of contradictions," says Broomfield, "that it caught our interest." Also, the Equal Rights Amendment was being widely discussed at the time and one of the most controversial questions around the issue was whether women would be drafted if it were passed. *Private Benjamin* appeared while Broomfield and Churchill were editing *Soldier Girls*, "but we didn't see it for ages and ages afterwards." When Broomfield finally did see *Private Benjamin*, he thought, "Bits of it were great fun. It was like *I Love Lucy* in the army, but I didn't think that there was any relationship between it and *Soldier Girls*. With a big subject like women in the army, you can have several films made, and they'll all be different."

Comparisons, however, seem unavoidable. As Janet Maslin wrote in the *New York Times*, "Scene after scene in *Soldier Girls* shows the truth to be much stranger than fiction. *Private Benjamin*, indeed." *Soldier Girls* promoters, including its distributor First Run Features, made a conscious effort to tie the two films together in the public mind. *Soldier Girls* was publicized as the "real story" behind *Private Benjamin* in the hope that the public, like Janet Maslin, would find that a documentary could be just as entertaining as a narrative film. And although *Soldier Girls* debuted after *Private Benjamin*, it wasn't too late to influence other Hollywood portrayals of army life. Both the television network that produced the subsequent *Private Benjamin* series and the studio that produced *An Officer and a Gentleman* looked at *Soldier Girls* for inspiration.

AN INDEPENDENT NARRATIVE THAT covers the same ground as a Hollywood feature can't use the promotional ploy of being the "real story" to attract interest. By the time they heard that *Frances*, starring Jessica Lange, was in the works, co-producers Sheila McLaughlin and Lynne Tillman had already shot 10 minutes of their script for *Committed*, another version of the Frances Farmer story, with McLaughlin in the leading role. They experienced a moment of panic when they thought about the resources that would be available to the Hollywood producers, but then concluded that the existence of the Hollywood film wouldn't affect their project. In fact, *Frances*—and a TV movie, *Will There Really Be a Morning?*, based on Farmer's autobiography—may have helped *Committed* in much the same way that *Flashdance* boosted *Wild Style*. "Farmer has become so popular," explains McLaughlin, "that people know a lot about her, and we didn't feel obliged to tell the whole story."

McLaughlin and Tillman first became interested in Farmer after seeing a picture of her in some Super-8 rushes shot by Vivienne Dick. "We wondered what had happened to her," Tillman recalls "and started reading 'Shadowland' [William Arnold's essay on the disintegration of Farmer's life and career]. The issues of her life—politics, psychiatry, the pre-



*New York Times* critic Janet Maslin compared *Private Benjamin*, a Goldie Hawn vehicle, to the independent documentary *Soldier Girls* (above).





Is it Sam Shepard and Jessica Lange doing their Billy Dee Williams/Diana Ross routine? Or is it just another Frances Farmer movie?



In the Universal Pictures portrayal, Frances Farmer was a victim, but independents Sheila McLaughlin and Lynne Tillman gave her character depth and motivation.

McCarthy victimization of a leftist—were far-reaching, beyond the biography of one person.”

After seeing the studio-produced *Frances*, the two independents were not impressed by the character Lange portrays. In Tillman’s analysis, “In the Hollywood film, there is no motivation for Farmer’s acts. You’re supposed to be sympathetic toward her, but you’re not given any real reasons why you should be. She’s portrayed as an isolated individual to whom horrible things happen, rather than someone whose life was controlled by and who was acting out against a particular culture. What are the forces that affect her and why are they bad? It doesn’t answer those questions.”

*Committed* avoids the birth-to-death linear narrative used in *Frances*. Its black-and-white film noir look and effective use of flashbacks and jump cuts create a mood that’s both dreamy and foreboding. And here the story is told from Farmer’s point of view. A number of central scenes show her in a sanatorium, explaining to her nurse the reasons why she did the things that provided her mother with evidence needed to commit her. Whereas *Frances* presents Farmer as victimized but still crazy, McLaughlin’s interpretation is an intelligent, self-aware, and angry woman, prevented from living the life she wants by a possessive and bitter mother, disappointing relationships with men, and an unwritten Hollywood code that demands that beautiful women be starlets but didn’t give Farmer the chance to become a serious actress. By the end of *Committed*, we know who’s to blame for Farmer’s disintegration—Tillman’s and McLaughlin’s feminist interpretation of her life packs a wallop that *Frances* lacks.

Both women think that there’s an audience for *Committed* because “people who see our film see such a different interpretation.” Although *Committed* does not yet have an American distributor, it has been screened at the Berlin Film Festival and Filmex and picked up for distribution in Germany, England, Holland, and Spain. “It’s harder for us to get distribution here,” says McLaughlin, “because we’re right next to Hollywood. In Europe, the existence of *Frances* didn’t stand in our way.”

*Committed* isn’t the only independent narrative that’s not being distributed because

Hollywood has already told its story, albeit in a different form. Another is *Overexposed*, a 60-minute film about photojournalists in Central America coming to terms with the personal and political ramifications of their work. Sound familiar? Brian Jones was a photojournalist himself, and his interest in making the film grew out of an incident in his own career: his inability to snap the shutter during an unsettling event. He settled on El Salvador as the location for the story because his central character was a combat photographer and Central America was the timely spot. Jones heard about *Under Fire* in the early phases of production because a number of people who were serving as technical advisers or crew members on *Overexposed* were contacted, or had friends who were contacted, about working on *Under Fire*. “I tried all along to get information about *Under Fire*, a shooting script or something, but both Warner Brothers and Orion denied any knowledge of the project. I was concerned because I knew that they had the budgets and locations that I wanted but couldn’t get.” *Under Fire* came out while Jones’s own film was in the cutting room. Although the two films were superficially very much alike (they even have one crucial line in common: “I don’t take sides, I take pictures”), Jones found that their perspectives on the subject differed significantly.

In *Overexposed*, the photographer’s choices (whether he takes pictures or not, whether he publishes them or not) do not have the kind of political impact implied in *Under Fire*. But, during the course of the film, Jones’s protagonist goes from being a photographer-robot—someone who is capable of looking at horror every day without emotion—to someone who is capable of strong feelings about what is taking place around him, someone capable of making personal, political connections.

As a former photojournalist, Jones is annoyed by the Nick Nolte character in *Under Fire*: “He falsifies the news, completely manipulates rather than reports. What right do journalists have deciding the fate of a country?” *Under Fire* was a commercial flop but that doesn’t give Jones any pleasure. In fact, *Under Fire*’s poor box office created problems for *Overexposed*: “I show my film to distributors

and they say, ‘*Under Fire* bombed and your film will bomb.’” Jones admits that his film is an odd duck. “I didn’t intend it to be this long and this slick, but it’s still neither long enough or slick enough to compete.” Jones has spoken to Independent Cinema Artists and Producers about selling the film to European television, and New York City public television station WNET has expressed some interest in including it in their *Independent Focus* series, while New Yorker Films thinks it might be able to package *Overexposed* with another non-feature film about Central America. But so far nothing has materialized, and Jones is disheartened. “The film is timely, and it’s serious, and it deserves attention in its own right.”

“Hollywood,” says Nick Broomfield, “is terribly frightened of doing anything new that it doesn’t have a formula for. It probably sees independents as the experimental sector and then picks up on the experiments that work.” The rare independent who manages to break through to the mass market, as in Charlie Ahearn’s case, will find his or her hold on that market very fragile. Cannon Films got *Breakin’* from the drawing boards to the theaters in seven months; Ahearn worked on *Wild Style* for two years and had to hustle for another year to get it released. And when it came out, *Breakin’* was able to shoot above *Wild Style*’s position in the list of 50 top grossing movies. “No matter how you slice it, promoting a low-budget independent film is hard,” cautions Janet Cole. “To a lot of people *Wild Style* was not real, simply because it was not a Hollywood multi-million dollar film.”

Independent films which don’t provide new grist for the Hollywood mill, like *Committed* and *Overexposed*, no matter how unique or well-conceived, are virtually frozen out of the market. Hollywood is a closed shop that smooths the path from production to distribution to exhibition only for its own projects—with very few exceptions. Hollywood would ignore independents altogether if some good ideas couldn’t be scavenged from time to time. Independent producers may find scant solace in the homily, “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.”

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# The Nuclear War Film: Peter Watkins Interviewed

SCOTT MACDONALD

In part because the BBC has continued its remarkable, and increasingly puzzling, worldwide ban on television broadcasts of *The War Game*, Peter Watkins is now involved in a second film about the arms race.<sup>1</sup> The new film has a far more ambitious structure than the 1966 film, involving not only Watkins's usual commitment to working with amateur actors, but the decision to fundraise, shoot, and distribute the film as a local community process in countries circling the globe. The new film has various working titles: "In the Mohawk Valley area of upstate New York, site of one of two planned U.S. episodes, we're calling it 'The War Game 2'; in the Portland, Oregon area, the other U.S. location, it's called 'The Global Anti-Nuclear War Film'; in Canada it's 'The Nuclear War Film.'"

In its earlier stages, the new project bore a closer relationship to *The War Game* than the version now in progress. In 1982 Watkins attempted to produce a remake of the 1966 Academy Award-winner in England, but solid support for the film was withdrawn by Central Television. The reason given for the collapse was that the estimated cost for the film had ballooned from 120,000 pounds to 750,000 pounds, but, according to Ken Nolley in *Literature/Film Quarterly*, the speed with which the project was cancelled at so late a date (five weeks before shooting was to begin) and the recent history of other nuclear issues films in Britain suggest the possibility of political motives.<sup>2</sup> Watkins came to the U.S. hoping to locate large-scale American financing in Hollywood or from cable TV. By this time (spring 1983), the plan was to center on a single American location (upstate New York) but to shoot some episodes in other countries. Efforts to locate production money here moved more slowly than Watkins had expected, but, in any case, he had already begun to grow increasingly committed to the idea of internationalizing the project as fully as possible. By the summer of 1983 he was no longer interested in pursuing large-scale commercial funding and had begun to make contacts and develop fundraising and production organizations in Sweden, the U.S., Canada, France, Scotland, West Germany, Mexico, Norway, Japan, Australia, the Soviet Union, Polynesia, and Africa.

It is still not clear exactly where all the episodes of the film will be shot, though the film is progressing more or less on schedule. Even in the U.S.S.R., where Watkins's hope of shooting independently with a non-Communist Party family seemed an impossible fantasy a year ago, support for the film has grown, and a September shooting date has been scheduled (whether Watkins leaves the Soviet Union with footage remains to be seen). In any case, Watkins is

determined to work as internationally as possible with families and groups of people, including survivors of the Hiroshima blast, who will speak for themselves about the multifaceted international complexities of the arms race, about its real and potential human costs, about the ways in which conventional film and television neutralize people's willingness to face the problems caused by the arms race, and about ways in which average people can work constructively to disentangle themselves from the present, increasingly dangerous situation. By completing the film, Watkins means to demonstrate the ability of people from widely diverse cultures, from first, second, and third world nations, to work together in a progressive way.

By last November, as a result of the broadcast of *The Day After* and of conversations with people about the new film, Watkins was no longer thinking in terms of the before/during/after scenario of a nuclear holocaust. Instead, he had begun to redirect his attention to what had come to seem a more positive direction, more in keeping with the film's synergic structure. The film will be asking, how can we work together to move out of the arms race and toward a safer world, and how can the process of filmmaking help us toward that end? The networking of citizens necessary to raise funds for the film and to produce local episodes is both a means to a finished film product in the usual sense, and an end in itself: the idea of completing a film with so many intrinsic difficulties (the language problem alone would stop most directors) is a catalyst for the process of international community development which, in Watkins's view, is the crucial first step in solving the problems the film will confront.

In Utica, New York, tests have been made for filming and videotaping a family episode (this way, families will be able to discuss not only their own feelings and thoughts, but those of families in other countries, who they'll be able to see on their television sets), and arrangements are being made for a sequence dealing with the issue of civil defense plans. Local researchers have been investigating the Oneida and Herkimer County evacuation plans in detail; their findings will be the basis for Watkins's dramatization of how such an event might look. The various episodes are scheduled to be shot during the fall of 1984; Watkins hopes to complete the editing by Aug. 6, 1985, in time for the fortieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

The major part of the following interview was recorded on Nov. 1, 1983, and transcribed and edited during the following month. In early February 1984, Watkins and I talked again, and

some of what I recorded during the second session has been combined with the earlier material.



**Scott MacDonald:** Obviously many people would say that it's complete madness for you to think you can actually complete this new project. I know of no film that's been substantially funded by the donations of individuals in several countries.

**Peter Watkins:** Well, nobody has actually said, yet, that such a thing is madness. And I don't see it as madness at all—quite the contrary. It is *because* we've gotten used to the media being so damned centralized that we think of such a project as unusual. You can find many aspects of the social process where the public should be involved but aren't. But here's a clear example where receivers are almost completely uninvolved in the creation of what they are receiving. It's fantastically off-balance. What I'm doing should be quite normal, as far as the process is concerned.

I'm quite sure that the film will get done. It may be that for one reason or another I won't be able to shoot the film in all the countries I hope to, but I don't think that will be for financial reasons. It may be because this country or that makes it too bureaucratic for me to function.

**SM:** How exactly are you raising money?

**PW:** I'm building up a several-tier process. In some countries we've applied for public funds. In France, for example, we're applying for a national grant, though the support for the film there is coming from the Midi-Pyrenees Regional Film Production Center in the south of France. I've applied for funds to cover the cost of the equipment and filming. But a local regional board has said that even if I don't get the grant, they will lend me the equipment for nothing. Wherever I can, I'm trying to cover my bets, so that if we get less than full funding, I'll have emergency plans to fall back on. I really cannot conceive that we won't raise such a pittance. *The Day After* cost \$7-million.

**SM:** How much are you trying to raise?

**PW:** If you add up the target allocations I've set for each country, it comes to nearly \$500,000, but I have a safety margin built in. Even if you were trying to raise money in just this country over the next year from public and cultural funds, \$500,000 would not be impossible. We're



trying to raise it in countries all over the world.

**SM:** What's your goal for the two U.S. episodes you plan to shoot?

**PW:** About \$150,000, a bit more than a third of the budget. Another third will be coming from Sweden: the Swedes are trying to raise about a million crowns [approximately \$150,000]. The other third will be raised elsewhere, in eight countries or so. In Sweden we've applied for two main grants. The National Film Board of Canada has offered to provide me with stock and costs, which I think means stock and equipment. But even it means stock, that will be very helpful for the episodes I do in Canada.

**SM:** But, even should you get some of the grants, much of the money will still come from individuals and groups in the various countries trying to raise money on their own.

**PW:** Yes, the public process. A large amount of money will come from that.

**SM:** When you were in this country in spring of 1983 you spent some time trying to get money from Hollywood, from Canadian commercial TV, and other commercial sources. But I had a sense even then that part of you wanted to generate funds on a more local basis, on principle.

**PW:** That's right. I wasn't ambivalent about the principle at all, but at that point I was concerned about the practice. It takes a long time to raise money. You can't be quite sure, until you're underway and really rolling, how people will respond to a particular project. It's a very special and individual chemistry, dependent on the time you're in, on the nature of the subject, on so many things. I tried to raise money publicly in England last year when I wanted to remake *The War Game*. That project was stopped by Central Television. We had started the public fundraising there, though I'm not sure if it's fair to judge the results or not. Around the time the project was stopped, we had raised about 20,000 pounds, which at present rate of exchange is around \$35,000. That was a national appeal concentrating mostly on England, but it went on for only about two months, and I think it tended to peter out once people thought that Central Television was paying for the film. We didn't get into the public process as we are now. There were few benefit showings. So it's hard to say whether that rather small amount of money was a warning or not, but it did show me that the process could take a tremendous amount of time. We were trying to find several hundred thousand dollars.

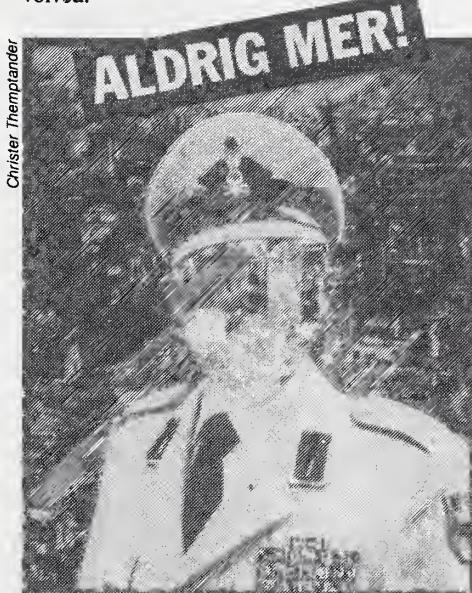
**SM:** At what point did the idea for this film become international?

**PW:** So much has happened in the last year and a half. I've been around the world twice just this year. My memory is getting a little faded out because of constant input. So I can't remember exactly, but the idea was already germinating by the time we tried approaching Home Box Office and Hollywood last spring.

**SM:** I know you want to shoot in the Soviet

Union. How do you mean to arrange that? Do you know other filmmakers who have worked that way?

**PW:** There are western filmmakers who have worked in Soviet-bloc nations, of course. There have even been some international television linking arrangements, and I think they're trying now to link citizens of Lawrence, Kansas, and citizens of Leningrad for *The Day After*. I'm not sure which citizens. But I don't know anyone who's done what I'm trying to do: deal with a major subject, with different yet common perspectives from all the major countries involved.



Major funding for Watkins's film will come from Sweden.

I don't know if the Soviet Union has ever been involved in this kind of process before. We're approaching the state authorities. It's very difficult because Soviet state authorities are extremely slow-moving; they're like the Indian state authorities—extremely bureaucratic, very much wanting to make sure that what comes out is favorable to the existing regime, or whatever. I'm approaching them saying that I don't want to have to deal very much with constraints. This is a film that can't function with the usual constraints. I told the Soviets that I wanted to film with a non-Party family. After all, I'm not filming with a U.S. "Party" family: some Washington family, fresh out of some Republican committee. There may lie the crunch. They've never had to deal with a non-structured project like this before, something that isn't all detailed on paper. They just don't understand it.

Western television doesn't understand that approach either: to work without a script would be unheard of. That you might have a learning process out of which the film develops is total anathema. I am very strongly aware of how revolutionary this project is going to be in terms of the existing mass media. Many people are so switched off from talking critically about the media that I'm a bit constrained. I can't really talk much about some of the internal meaning of this project for fear it will sound too abstract. I talk most about the way in which the film will

very, very publicly ask people to challenge the way the media is functioning—that will not be entirely clear until the film comes out. One of the aims of the film is to compel the film establishment and the media to actually deal not only with "content," the nuclear issue in this case, but with the effects of conventional media language on the issue and on the widespread feeling of powerlessness about the issue.

Anyway, if you can understand that there are difficulties *here* in dealing with this process, you can imagine how difficult it is in the Soviet Union. We're dealing with the Soviet Peace Committee, which is the internal peace organ in charge, I think, of all internal peace arrangements and all peace people who visit the Soviet Union. I'm going to sit down in front of these people, and I'm going to be quite open about what this film is about. I'm going to ask them to help us give the film top priority, to say that the film is absolutely essential. If they won't do that, I won't go there: I'll find some way of doing it outside the Soviet Union. [The Soviet Union agreed to a family sequence which was shot in Moscow in August.]

**SM:** Most people find *The War Game* an extremely powerful, painful, gripping dramatization of a nuclear holocaust. To what extent do you expect to have this film be powerful in that way?

**PW:** I've never repeated any film I've made. And I'm not interested in doing that. I won't think about *The War Game*. This film is going to be very different. It will make me work in different ways. The blending of the various elements will be entirely different. One thing I plan to do, that I've not done as overtly before, is to deconstruct some scenes. I'd like to show the effects a cut has, how a scene is constructed.

**SM:** You mean that the film will move back and forth between narrative and self-reflexive examination of narrative.

**PW:** Yes, though I think you can use "narrative" here only in the very loosest sense. The film will be constantly moving from one set of people to another. There will be a certain chronological drive which will be interrupted from time to time by self-reflexive moments.

The film is global. It will link ordinary people together by creating a sharing of their common, universal concerns about the future and the present, and about the increasing centralization in society today, which is denying individual people a voice in implementing their own destinies. Linked with the direct threat of nuclear war, this process, in turn, is causing a global sense of powerlessness among many, many people. The depoliticization of the public, aided in many cases by a diverse range of social agencies, such as educational institutions, the mass media, etc., is leading toward the threat of a self-fulfilling prophecy. By effectively removing any form of broad social and political opposition to the centralized acquisition and development of nuclear weapons, this depoliticization is leading to a steady erosion of moral and ethical sensitivity, further increasing our chances of nuclear war. Basically, the U.S. is now mounting a war



economy and a war psychology, and despair in this country about doing anything about it is a very big personal shock for me.

The objective of this film is to indicate that there *are* things, many things, that can and must be done immediately to roll back the tide of helplessness in the public. Asking people to reprogram themselves away from the traumatic and pacifying effects of the media is but one thing we can do. Community projects aimed not only at opposing the nuclear arms race, but at getting life and direction back into the social and political process is another. Everything is involved here. The nuclear arms race is changing the entire direction of society—morally, ethically, socially, economically, and politically. And nuclear weapons can only be abolished by disentangling them from the infrastructures of society. This means that we must struggle now for meaningful change across the entire social process. Examples of community-based projects working toward this end will be presented in the film. They are what we can call “disentanglement sequences.”

What I'm planning to do and the way that I'm planning to do it have changed quite significantly from my original ideas last year, partly because of my recent experiences in Japan, where I met survivors of the original blasts and saw the large amount of documentation of the bombings which already exists. In some of the countries where I'll shoot, I'll be staging episodes from the period leading up to a nuclear war. I'll stage that part in order to look at all the things I've been talking about: the breakdown of civil liberties, the chaos of civil defense, the danger of getting into crisis relocation.

Already, nuclear weapons are corrupting constitutions. An example is the Japanese constitution, which is being ignored quite regularly by the Japanese and the U.S. governments. United States aircraft carriers regularly come into the Japanese seaport of Yokosuka, below Yokohama. In fact, Yokosuka—not a port in the U.S., a port in Japan!—is the home base of the Seventh Fleet. Now the Japanese constitution, drawn up after the war, states specifically and categorically that nuclear weapons will never be placed in Japan, that they will not be acquired by Japan, or come into Japan by transit. But the U.S. ships obviously carry nuclear weapons. It's just an example of the erosion that's developing.

Anyway, for these and for other reasons, it's very important to stage the events which lead toward war, so long as I don't show the war actually occurring.

**SM:** You're not planning to dramatize the war itself, or its aftermath, as you did in *The War Game*?

**PW:** Absolutely not. What we must move away from now is the feeling that a nuclear war is inevitable. To continue to dramatize the effects of nuclear holocaust can only serve a negative purpose now.

**SM:** If I understand you, the public process you mentioned will take place on a number of different levels. There's the process involved in

raising money for the film, which involves local organizing and many people. And, when you shoot the various episodes, you'll be working with amateurs, non-actor citizens who will work with you in generating their own statements about the subject. But when the film is finished, what do you hope for in terms of distribution? Will you use standard distribution outlets? Where do you perceive this film being shown?

**PW:** What I hope is that large-scale distribution will happen, though you must understand that this is going to be an extremely challenging and critical film. I'm dealing with a rigidly built-up social process or social phenomenon: the way we rely on the media, the way we use the media. It's going to require a lot of work to change that. Of course, it's ironic to put this subject into a film. But one of the main things I want to do is ask the audience to consider the possible relationship between the conventional language of television or film, the usual daily language and its very clear structures, and some of the structures of society which I think are emerging more and more strongly. I think the media is one structural language conditioning us to accept another set of structures.

I really wouldn't like to project how television companies are going to react when asked to show the film, a self-reflexive film which is not just a didactic exercise on the blackboard, but which confronts the issue in the context of nuclear war. But the film will be put on the desks of all the television organizations, in each of the countries where we film. And you can be quite sure that there will be people ready to make a strong challenge when any of those companies reject the film. I'm quite sure that there will be a sizeable rejection. The only thing I cannot project is who will do the rejecting. Neither can I be sure about the cinema distributors, some of whom are very conservative, some of whom are very helpful.

I'm going to try it all, because that's the only means one has of reaching large numbers of people. And I want the film to earn money, because it's important that money comes back into the groups that helped—and into movement toward demilitarization. But I can't rely on that, as I know from bitter experience. So, we're going to try and set up an alternative distribution—it's just a theory at this point—asking different groups to start a series of showings in local halls, in churches, at universities, in public places where there can be rigorous debate on the material the film is dealing with. I want that to happen a great deal. I'm going to aim for that, because that's the nearest equivalent in distribution to the way in which the film is being made. It's organized to be part of a discussion that explodes upwards and outwards.

**SM:** In this country most films that have tried to deal self-reflexively with film and media language and to provide alternatives to it have tended to be shown in the art ghettos in big cities; despite the wishes of many of the filmmakers, the audience never expands very far. For me, what sounds remarkable about this project is

your attempt to bridge the gap. You're not just talking about film, or about making a film about film; you're using the making of a film to demonstrate and develop new kinds of relationships between producers, films, and audiences.

**PW:** There are filmmakers concerned in examining form; quite a lot of them do that. Some do very interesting work. But many of them don't seem anxious to go further with what they do, by taking it into the actual social process. You can't just talk about nuclear weapons blowing people up anymore. You have to talk about the society which is creating them, the society which is seemingly pushing down people's ability to be able to respond to them. The issue is going to be everywhere, and you cannot deal with it, as the peace movement has often tended to deal with it, as something destructive which one has to simply pluck out, like plucking out the core of a malignancy. Here the core is not a lump. It's got obscene roots going everywhere now. And the moment you understand that, you have to start dealing with why people are not reacting. And *that* leads to why people know so little. Why did the British rush to war in the Falkland Islands? Why do so many U.S. citizens accept Grenada and El Salvador? These are all examples, which you can see leading right up to a nuclear war situation. Quite exactly, one has to deal with the way we are receiving our information (and our entertainment, because the two are linked together) and with how that process is intricately interwoven into the quality of life, shaping people's political thinking. We all know this in theory, but we never move on it. We just go on letting it happen, without any kind of public reflexivity, which is really what I'm talking about: public participation in the processing of information.

I suppose one way of saying it is that I think the process which I'm trying to get going in this film is one model, just one, of the kinds of ways in which I think the media should be working with society, with the public. I think there should be a psychological and intellectual relationship, like a working relationship, between the media and the public, not simply a closed masonic secret language coming from one kind of power source to the receiving public who don't quite understand the language of manipulation. This is *totally undemocratic*. I'm trying to do all I can to redress that balance, but not only on an intellectual level.

As things are, the media is a fantastic metaphor. The U.S. fires off nuclear missiles, including the MX missiles they test, from the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. They fire the missiles into an atoll in the Marshall Islands. It's called the Missile Firing Range, the MFR. The islanders are moved away, so the missiles presumably don't hit them. But the image of firing this stuff off towards a clump of islands thousands of miles away is just parallel to the way the media works. Just launch the stuff towards the public, and say goodbye.

You make a film, with all this intensive agony and creative labor. You see it with your cronies

(continued on page 32)

OCTOBER 1984



## IN FOCUS

# Tape Wars: Camcorders Compared

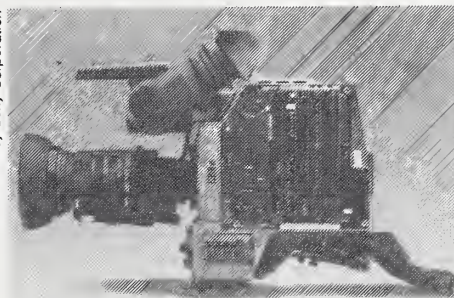
DAVID LEITNER

What started as a casual "what if" conversation among friends culminated last March in a comparison demonstration of Sony Betacam, Panasonic Recam and Ikegami HL-79DA at ex-AIVF board member Matt Clarke's Primalux Video in Manhattan. Independent producers Bill Ackerland, Doug Block, Rob Halle and friends assembled the three systems—gratis—from, respectively, C.L.O.S. Video, Rebo Associates and Primalux; then invited all interested parties, including the NABET camera department, to view the results. Quite a few souls braved a wind-whipped rainstorm to attend the capacity gathering. Evidently, they too were anxious to resolve the question foremost in the minds of many independent producers with limited budgets: Can the new professional single-piece camera/recorder systems, or "camcorders," that feature the economies of ½" cassette recording also deliver a technical standard tantamount to 1" Type-C, the current professional standard?

Particularly remarkable that inclement evening in March was the spirit of open-minded discovery that guided the proceedings—they were not, as has been wrongly reported elsewhere, "a confrontation of antagonists." Instead, freelancers, independent producers and representatives of both Sony and Panasonic joined in a fair look at the pros and cons of the new ½" recording formats. They solicited each other's views. This was gratifying, for the accelerated rate at which video technology is evolving calls for a modicum of humility. No total experts exist at this juncture.

As if to underscore the point, the demonstration provided an inadvertent object lesson in just how tricky it can be for the non-technician to evaluate what's going on in new video production equipment. For their "out-of-box" comparison, the demonstration's organizers arranged the two camcorders (Betamax and Recam) plus the HL-79DA cabled to a 1" Type-C recorder around a small, lit stage. A female model and some familiar objects were placed in position, and a series of tests intended to compare low light performance, contrast reproduction, color balance characteristics, etc. was taped. Unfamiliarity with the technology, however, hampered the effort: a series of contrast tests had to be retaped because of an obvious shading error in the Betacam (even the Sony sales specialist stood by and failed to notice), and the enhancement levels of the Betacam and Recam weren't matched, rendering the one apparently sharper than the other,

Courtesy Sony Corporation



The BVP-3, Sony's latest weapon in the war of the camcorders.

especially to the naive eye. (Such are the vagaries of video.)

But what, exactly, is measured in this sort of video "shoot-out"? Comparing two film cameras is a relatively straightforward matter, as long as the same lens and raw stock are used, because a film camera performs only a single mechanical function: advancing the film. Any further tests of light sensitivity or color reproduction are actually tests of the motion picture negative that senses the image during exposure, processes the image during developing and stores it in a photographic "memory." In a three-tube video camera, however, there is no motor, no mechanism: it is the target layer of each of the three tubes that senses the image, the "proc-amp" circuitry of the camera that processes the image, the VTR circuits coupled to magnetic heads that introduce the image signal to the tape, and the tape that stores the image in magnetic memory—all before the variables of VTR playback circuitry and monitor are introduced.

At the Primalux demo, each three tube camera housed a different type of pick-up tube (which was similar to loading three film cameras with Kodak, Fuji and Agfa); employed not only a different recording tape, but a different recording technology; and even featured a different design of zoom lens—often used, as in the contrast demonstration, at full aperture, where lens performance is always questionable. Since many of these components can be interchanged, it's hard to say that the test results demonstrated anything more than three particular ensembles, their electronics tweaked in a particular fashion on that particular day.

However, in lieu of solid, clinical test re-

sults—despite the initiative and best efforts of the testers—a consensus did emerge that the new camcorders with their ½" cassettes produce results superior to original ¾" and comparable to 1". The general impression was that all three systems produced superb images, all equally professional to that ultimate arbiter, the subjective eye. And in the course of the ensuing discussion, it became increasingly clear that the real issue was not tape width, but rather the introduction of a new and better recording technology.

Unlike film, tape width doesn't dictate the richness of image detail (bandwidth). In the case of film, the image is a fixed, physical facsimile, and the amount of detail possible is a function of the size of the frame: 16mm can record finer detail than Super-8, 35mm than 16mm, and so on. In contrast, the image on tape is a total abstraction, a magnetic likeness of a single fluctuating voltage, the signal. The amount of detail possible is a function of how often that voltage can fluctuate within a given framework of time. One way to effectively stretch time is to increase the speed with which the tape traverses the recording head, or vice versa. If the recording head can travel a greater distance per second, it can induce, over a longer stretch of tape, a greater number of subtle magnetic fluctuations. This greater number of fluctuations per second represents a signal of greater frequency and permits a higher bandwidth recording. Not surprisingly, then, the Beta cassette of the Betacam and the VHS of the Recam—both of which are physically identical to the consumer versions—yield only 20 minutes of recording time instead of the normal one hour plus.

The ½" recorders of the Betacam and Recam have a second trick up their sleeves, as well. Sony's Larry See, on hand for the Primalux demo, pointed out that, instead of referring to the new formats as "½", it would be more correct to term them "component video." He's 100% correct. These new video formats record the signal in a fashion clearly superior to conventional ½", ¾", 1" and 2" formats. In a word, they are not NTSC! (NTSC is our standard color broadcast signal, created by the National Television Standards Committee in the early 1950s as a compromise to allow simultaneous black-and-white and color broadcasting; the Europeans, who waited to see how it would work out for the Yanks before devising their own compromise color signals, derogate NTSC as Never Twice the Same Color, and they're not entirely wrong.)

To create NTSC, the outputs of the red-, green-, and blue-sensitive pick-up tubes in the camera are blended together in an "encoded composite" signal. The recipe is as follows: add 59% green signal, 30% red and 11% blue to create a "luminance" component signal. (This is what a black-and-white receiver displays.) Separate what's left over into two "chrominance" component signals, basically red and blue. Fold them into the luminance signal in a such a manner that only a receiver with a special



decoder—a color TV set—can sift them out. Working backwards from the above percentages, the color receiver can extrapolate from the luminance component the original green signal and resurrect a full red, green, and blue display. So... what's the problem with NTSC encoding and decoding? As it happens, the luminance and chrominance signals influence and interfere with one another when they're mixed. Like all signal processing, encoding and decoding takes its toll.

If a video signal is recorded for any purpose other than broadcast, why do the luminance and chrominance components have to be encoded together to form a composite NTSC broadcast signal? They don't; NTSC encoding needn't take place until just prior to broadcasting or dubbing. Indeed, there's talk of a super high-quality 1" "component" recorder for mastering and editing. But while that technology awaits the future, the first wave of component recording is here now in the form of the Betacam and Recam ½" VTRs.

The Betacam and Recam VTRs record the luminance and chrominance signals on two separate tracks, like stereo audio recording. Each uses a different technique to lay the two

chrominance signals together on the second track, but the improvement in each case is quite similar. (The two formats are incompatible anyway: one is a Betamax type, the other VHS, and never the twain shall meet.) Both record component signals directly from the camera. At no point is the signal encoded into a single composite NTSC signal.

Since the chrominance components of the ½" component formats are not distorted in the encoding/decoding process, it's arguable that ½" component video produces better color fidelity than 1" Type-C. With regard to image detail, the bandwidth of the luminance component of each new ½" format with its increased head/tape speed easily surpasses original ¾" and approaches that of 1" Type-C, although both do fall a little short. (Note: The eye is most acute in the green region of the spectrum. Because the luminance component derives mostly from the green signal, it establishes the level of detail possible. The same is true of the green-sensitive layer of film.)

The crowd at Primalux that night in March left convinced that, overall, the Betacam and

Recam tests looked as good as the Ikegami HL-79DA/1" Type-C tests. The cameras that form half of the Betacam and Recam camcorders were impressive too: the Sony BVP-3 and the Panasonic AK-100 are absolutely state-of-the-art (open a BVP-3 and examine the Very Large Scale Integrated circuits and the miniature mixed field ⅔" Saticons). Although it was impossible to rate the ½" component Beta and VHS technologies against one another, everyone sensed that they represent a giant step in the right direction.

Perhaps Barry Rebo, whose Rebo Associates has owned and operated two trouble-free Panasonic Recams for the past 14 months, put it best: "I can't imagine anyone wanting to go out and buy an HL-79 and a BVH-500 [portable Sony 1" field VTR] or an Ampex 5 [VPR-5, the compact 1" VTR designed by Nagra] for \$45,000 once you see what these things can do."

*Next Month: ½" Component, Part 2: Editing, Expense, and the Experiences of Independent Producers*

*David Leitner is an independent film producer who works at DuArt Film Labs in New York City.*

## Letters

(continued from page 3)

Angeles" as being a "universal villain of theatrical self-distribution" is unfathomable. The City of Los Angeles helped us platform and launch *Cortez*. Los Angeles embraced *Cortez* and made it possible for the film to be viewed theatrically in the rest of the country. Attacking Los Angeles, or New York City, or any other region of the country for that matter reveals a deadly attitude contrary to the best interests of independents. Fundamental to the concept of "regional breakouts" is that each region has its own specific, separate, and distinct characteristics—its own objective conditions for success and failure.

Let the mainstream promote attitudes. We, as independents, cannot afford them. Que viva *Gregorio Cortez*.

—Robert Hoffman  
Lions Gate Films, Los Angeles

*Susan Linfield replies:*

It's always misleading to read with tunnel vision—looking only for one's own quotes—as Bob Hoffman seems to have done with my article. My intention was not to write a puff piece on self-distribution, but to accurately report on the experiences of a cross-section of independent filmmakers, of whom Hoffman was only one. The words "exhausting, debilitating, and overwhelming" which seem to have upset Hoffman were direct quotes from various filmmakers, but there was no implication in the article that they necessarily referred to *Gregorio Cortez*'s distributors.

My information on the Embassy-*Cortez* relationship and the film's New York opening came from Hoffman himself. I reported on the sequence of events which lead to *Cortez*'s pick-up and subsequent dropping by Embassy, but never even discussed the question of "antipathy" to which Hoffman refers.

Finally, my criticism of Los Angeles as inhospitable to independent films was meant somewhat facetiously, but, again, is an accurate reflection of what many filmmakers—including some who were interviewed for but not quoted in the article—told me.

## The Battle of Chili

*To the editor:*

Thanks for the "puff" (if that's the word) on *The New Mexico Chile Film* [see "In and Out of Production" by Mary Guzy, *The Independent*, June 1984]. However, you made one dreadful, grating, painful change which I can hardly bear. It is true that there is such a thing as "chili," and that style manuals tell you to spell it that way. But that is *not*, repeat *not*, what this film is about (there is even a section discussing the difference). "Chili" refers to a concoction made by gringos, particularly in Texas, but as far away as New York City, or even London. It is a different animal from New Mexico *chile*, which is made primarily by Hispanics. "Chile" is a Mexican-Spanish word meaning the fruit of the capsicum plant, and by derivation, sauces made from that fruit. It is probably the origin of the word "chili," but denotes a different history, cooking style, taste, cuisine, and ethnic group. This film is not about "chili" at all. But I'm sure it was an honest mistake. Oh, well.

—Pacho Lane  
Cerrillos, New Mexico

*Marry Guzy replies:*

Gimme a break, Pacho! We just nailed down "quiche" and "chablis." We're working on "gelati" and "margarita" (make it a double with lots of salt). The burrito has barely made it across the Appalachians. Will New York ever discover *grits*?!

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## FESTIVALS

# New Directors: Filmmakers' Film Festival

"A lot of distributors were talking but not putting out. Distributors toy with you—they can hang you up. I needed more contacts. I took a chance, but I was afraid. If it had gotten panned it would have hurt me. But I had to decide." Charlie Ahearn decided in the affirmative—to show his film *Wild Style* in last year's New Directors/New Films program, presented in New York by the Film Society of Lincoln Center and the Department of Film at the Museum of Modern Art. For Ahearn the gamble paid off; enthusiastic crowds packed his opening night screening (although not without a little help from the filmmaker, who bought tickets for quite a few of *Wild Style*'s extended family members from the outer boroughs of New York), the film was reviewed in the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice*, and First Run Features offered a distribution deal (although they had previously seen the film at the 1982 Independent Feature Project Market).

The Film Society of Lincoln Center is the sole sponsoring organization of the New York Film Festival. Festival director Richard Roud, Film Society directors Joanne Koch and Wendy Keyes, and MOMA film curators Larry Kardish and Adrienne Mancina share programming responsibilities for ND/NF; between them, they screen 300-400 films per year. MOMA contributes a public relations and administrative staff to the series. Otherwise the museum's role is less tangible, although it serves to define the program's image. But the rarified atmosphere associated with museum-sponsored events can work to label a new film an "art film"—which is not always to a filmmaker's advantage. For instance, Ahearn, who released *Wild Style* in the heart of Times Square for a mass audience, was able to reach another segment of the film-going public at the ND/NF screening. But he was reluctant to participate in the film's post-screening discussion because he "didn't want to turn it into something academic." Ahearn explained, "I was uptight about the screening having a pretentious art audience. I was afraid it might be too 'museum-y.'"

Often overlooked is the fact that ND/NF is primarily a foreign film festival—although, according to Joanne Koch, its funding agencies would love to see more American films on the program. "Our interests are to go with American independent producers. The point is to expose [them]." In 1984, though, 18 films from 14 countries were screened, with Charles Burnett's *My Brother's Wedding* and Steve Brand's *Kad-*

*dish* the only U.S. features (France had a hand in four productions). Nineteen eighty-three, a better year for American independents, included *Wild Style*, Spike Lee's *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads* and *A Marriage by Sandy Tung*. Shorts were exclusively American: *Suzanne, Suzanne* by Camille Billops and James Hatch, *Ritual* by Andy Anderson and *SPFX: 1140* by Bob Balaban. But for Ahearn, it's a good thing that ND/NF is a foreign festival: *Wild Style* was seen by a representative of Daiei, the Japanese company that brought *Irezumi—Spirit of Tattoo* to the series that year. They contracted for Ahearn's film, and subsequently brought 35 cast members, breakers and rappers to Japan for a promo visit, as well as spinning off books and records from the film.

Larry Kardish says the ND/NF programmers "are looking to make discoveries—to help new filmmakers receive attention they wouldn't normally receive." But the overwhelming majority of films screened are narratives, and Kardish says a film "submitted by a studio would be considered." He continued, "Films don't keep falling in our laps—we've got to go out and look." Because filmmakers don't work in a vacuum and because Mancina, Kardish, Koch, Roud and company spend so much time attending festivals and seeing films, Kardish believes that "by the



Parviz Sayyad's film *The Mission* was picked up for commercial distribution after it screened at New Directors.

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time New Directors comes around we've seen it all." But even after Cannes, Venice, the IFP Market, requests from distributors, reviews in *Variety*, calling colleagues in San Francisco, Chicago and Boston, and passionate insistence by any member of the committee, unsolicited films will be screened and considered. Three of the American features (*A Marriage*, *Joe's Bed-Stuy*, and *Kaddish*) in the past two years were unsolicited, while John Sayles's *Return of the Secaucus Seven* (1980) and Wayne Wang's *Chan is Missing* (1982) were new to the committee when they were screened. Two foreign features in 1984 and 1983 respectively, Fernando Colomo's *Skyline* and *The Mission* by Parviz Sayyad, an Iranian filmmaker living in exile in the U.S., "came across the transom," as Kardish puts it.

Of the selection process, Ahearn said, "It doesn't mean these are the best movies. It's the committee's conception of what 'new directors' means." Darryl Chin, who worked in the museum's film department in 1979-1980, says, "Often people think [selection] is rigged—that they know what they want. But it's not that way. And they take into account if it's an independent film, or a film made by a woman or a member of a minority."

Once a film has been accepted by the festival, filmmakers agree that it is, as Kardish says, "coddled." (Only in New York could a festival which is held for two straight weeks in a 600-seat theater, sponsored by an internationally renowned museum and extensively covered by the press, be called "intimate.") Jerry Barrish, whose *Dan's Motel* was shown in 1982, said, "The committee couldn't have been nicer," and he termed ND/NF the "highlight" of a 10-year filmmaking career. According to Burnett, the organizers were "very nice, absolutely helpful. They set up press screenings and invited distributors. There were some people from other film festivals there. It was well-organized."

In the festival's early years, attendance figures were pretty light, says Kardish. "Papers resisted doing reviews and distributors weren't interested. But now, foreign festivals and other cultural organizations solicit us." Filmmakers like



Alain Tanner and Eagle Pennell, who were first seen in ND/NF, subsequently appeared in the New York Film Festival (and success there could mean release not only of that film but of an earlier work as well). There is also the possibility, as in the cases of Ahearn and Burnett, that a film that can't get into the New York Film Festival will be requested for New Directors.

There are very few instances where a screening at ND/NF would hurt your film; but keep in mind that it's then available to the New York press—which is a tricky situation if you're doing that dance with a distributor. Most American films which have already been picked up by distributors prior to the selection process are not made available to the committee because of the risk of bad reviews. Or, as Barrish, said, "In New Directors, people [distributors] can still look at you as an amateur." Therefore, given the reluctance of studio-produced films and those which have already captured distributors' attentions, the field is wide open for lesser-known independents.

Five of the 18 films screened at ND/NF in 1984 have since received commercial distribution in this country: *Skyline*; *Biquefarre*, Georges Roquier's film from France; *Sugar Cane Alley* by Euzhan Palcy, a France/Martinique production; and *Improper Conduct*, Nestor Almendros and Orlando Jimenez-Leal's French documentary about Cuba. The ratio was identical in 1983, and, besides *Wild Style*, *Irezumi*, and *The Mission*, included *A Question of Silence*, a Netherlands release by Marleen Gorris which was solicited after Cannes.

—Robert Aaronson

The exact dates of the festival (March and April) have not been finalized as of this writing. Interested filmmakers should contact Jack Barth at the Film Society of Lincoln Center, 140 West 65th St., New York, N.Y. 10023; tel. (212) 877-1800. Applications will be sent out by Nov. 1 for a Jan. 1 deadline. There is no charge for submitting your film, but you do have to pay round trip postage. A per diem is available for filmmakers who attend.

## Havana on My Mind

The Fifth International Festival of New Latin American Cinema, held last December in Havana, included hundreds of features, animation films and documentaries from virtually every Latin American and some Caribbean nations, along with an extensive retrospective of U.S. independent films. The Latin offerings ranged from the newest production of Radio Venceremos, the filmmaking arm of El Salvador's guerrilla organization, to schlocky sex farces from Argentina. A festive atmosphere prevailed throughout, with simultaneous offerings of competition films in the Cine Charlie Chaplin, non-competition productions in the MECLA (buyer's market), Cuban retrospective screenings at ICAIC (the Cuban Film Institute) and the U.S. retrospective at the La Rampa cinema.

Cuba is considered an aesthetic beacon by many Latin filmmakers, with its documentaries and newsreels, in particular, having influenced



Che, Cuba's pop hero, pops up all over Havana.

directors throughout the continent and, indeed, the world. (Cuba itself is somewhat of a haven for Latin exiles, and among the high points of my trip was catching a glimpse of Patricio Guzman, director of *The Battle of Chile*.) Among the hot Cuban films this year were *Up to a Certain Point*, the new narrative by (Memories of Underdevelopment) Tomas Gutierrez Alea (we North Americans thought it was a fairly traditional story about a married man's conflict between wife and girlfriend, but the Cubans informed us that it was actually about the relationship between intellectuals and workers in Cuban society), which was awarded the top prize by the international jury; best documentary-winner *Los Marielitos*, partially shot by a U.S. crew, an effective attack on Cuban emigrants to this country which met with lusty cheers from the Cubans in the audience (it was kind of like watching *Rocky* in a Times Square theater); and Manuel Octavio Gomez's *Patakin*, an irreverent, inspired musical. Best "non-Latino film" award went to Peter Kinoy, Pamela Yates and Tom Sigel's *When the Mountains Tremble*.

This year, the festival featured a diverse but poorly-attended sidebar of U.S. independent films called "The Other Face" (programmed partially on the basis of suggestions from North American independents). It ranged from narratives such as *Killer of Sheep* to shorts from the Film and Photo League to *Columbia Revolt* and other Newsreel films from the '60s to such recent documentaries as *The Atomic Cafe*. There were also two seminars—"The Distribution and Exhibition of the New Latin American Cinema" and "The U.S. Independent Cinema"—which included talks by, among others, critic B. Ruby Rich (who spoke about homosexuality in films), former Newsreel member Eric Breitbart (*Clockwork*), experimental film distributor Freude Bartlett and J. Hoberman, *Village Voice* critic.

But let's face it, one goes to the Latin American Film Festival not so much to look at movies as to look at Havana—blockaded and reviled by six American presidents, revered as the city on the hill by the New Left (remember the Venceremos Brigades?). And if you're into contradictions, this is the place to be: a city where Che has replaced Jesus as a popular hero (forget the official posters—his face peers courageously into the future from cars, buses, apartments, hallways); where, despite admonitions that "Revolution is Construction," parties last until 4 a.m. and rum flows; where scantily clad but generously befeathered women dance at the Tropicana nightclub (obviously a spot for gringos and other tourists) while schoolchildren in demure but touchingly messy red uniforms stream through the streets. Havana is poor, shabby, and in bad need of a paint job, while simultaneously colorful, friendly, hot and relaxed. (People come up to you on the street and ask if you're Russian, German or Canadian, and are surprised but pleased to find you're from the U.S.—a generous reaction, I thought, given the Bay of Pigs and all that.) In fact, as a New Yorker, I felt pretty much at home.

Most fascinating about Cuba is its attempt to build a socialist society on the basis of scant material resources without resorting to grim austerity or authoritarianism. The question is not (as some of my friends asked when I returned home), "Have they done it?" but, rather, "How are they doing?" Havana is much poorer than I expected—some grocery stores make bodegas in New York look luxurious, rationing is clearly a necessity (although I saw people waiting on lines only to go into nightclubs and restaurants, not grocery or clothing stores), clothing is simple, and pharmacies look like something from an old movie. But also absent are the disease, wrenching poverty, illiteracy and violence that plague most of Latin America. And, during my admittedly brief (10-day) and episodic stay there, I had no feeling of a people whose egalitarian experiment has left them spiritually crushed, intellectually stifled or sexually repressed (and I did not speak only to intellectuals or artists). In fact, it's hard to come away from Havana without feeling that traditional Cuban nationalism and modern revolutionary loyalty have merged into a fierce determination to preserve the post-1959 gains. "What are you doing about Reagan?" the Cubans ask.

—Susan Linfield

The Sixth International Festival of New Latin American Cinema will be held this December in Havana. Competition accepts films in 16mm and 35mm which "support Latin America and express our battles and our reality," or which deal with Latin American communities and culture in North America. Fiction, documentary and animation invited; entries due by Nov. 1. Video accepted for MECLA. Contact: Distribuidora Internacional de Peliculas, ICAIC, Calle 23 -No. 1155, Vedado, Habana, Cuba: Telex: 511419. If you're interested in attending the festival, contact: Marazul Tours, 250 W. 57 St., Suite 1312, New York, NY 10107; tel. (212) 582-9570.



## Las Mujeres

Women filmmakers from throughout Latin America sat down together during the Latin American Film Festival to discuss common experiences and ways to enlarge women's role in the mainly male film world. The atmosphere was charged with warmth and excitement as women looked around the large circle of faces on the patio at the Hotel Nacional, realizing that many of them belonged to the first woman director of one country, the first woman cinematographer of another. Between 50 to 100 women attended and spent three hours swapping stories, after an intrusive Cuban TV news crew was ejected from the meeting.

Many of the women described a familiar form of job ghettoization: women crop up most often in such slots as script continuity "because we are good at detail work," or production managing, "because we are so attractive that people will cooperate with us."

A Mexican who is the only woman directing in that country's feature industry advised hard work and relentless persistence as the best way to crack the boys' club. She got a laugh when she observed that women have to stop playing Anna Karenina, who watches the train pull out, and instead run home to their desks to write their scripts. The North American women pointed out the links between feminist consciousness and their infiltration of the film world since the 1960s. Emiko Omori of San Francisco added that her experience organizing the first women's craft media union in the Bay Area convinced her of the importance of flexible job conditions which can accommodate women's needs. A Cuban concurred, noting that since heavy old 35mm cameras are the norm in Cuba, most women have a rough time handling equipment.

The most heated moments came when several women rapped the festival's film selection, which allowed sexist films while condemning racist ones. An Argentinian feature, *The Last Victim*, was singled out for heavy criticism of its incessant and voyeuristic misogyny. American cinematographer Judy Irola said she hoped never again to see 20 all-male jurors mount the stage to hand out prizes. The women assembled agreed that film programmers must wake up to sexism, and should, at the very least, organize time for debates and discussions of controversial films.

The women suggested to the festival's organizers that future festivals include far greater female representation, drawn not only from the ranks of directors but also of actors, editors, cinematographers, sound people, producers. And the group recommended greater women's output at every level of the festival planning.

—Kathleen Hulser

Kathleen Hulser is a freelance media critic.



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## New Music America: A Moveable Fest

Each year a lively and colorful parade of maverick artists encamps at New Music America. This festival displays the sonic and visual wares of composers, choreographers, and performance/installation/multimedia artists. It also extends a warm welcome to similarly oriented film and videomakers. Although a few token mainstreamers are showcased, the heart of the festival throbs in the realm of the certifiably unhinged. It presents avant-gardists and experimentalists of all stars, stripes and colors. Its catholicity embraces even those who have gone completely over the edge and are somehow roaming the sides of the precipice, if not the void beyond. In this exuberant holiday atmosphere, numerous aesthetic conflicts are generally genial.

Moving to a new city every year, the policies of each festival are determined by the local presenting organization. Thus, the arrangements and experiences at the Sixth Annual New Music America, mounted July 1-7, 1984, at Hartford, Conn., by Real Art Ways, provides at best an amorphous and grainy image of what might happen the next time around.

Invited and open submission of ¾" videotapes were curated into a show that represented 21 artists with 30 titles, including AIVF members Lawrence Kucharz and Jaime Davidovich. Tapes ran for six days in the House of Representatives Chamber of the Old State House. Forty padded chairs arranged in semi-circles ringed two pairs of 19" monitors, so no one sat more than eight feet from a screen. The speakers of the excellent stereo sound system were inexplicably placed so close together that channel separation was usually defeated. Perhaps this was an effort to extract the hidden mono artifacts embedded in the stereo soundtracks. The organizers' promise that videotapes would be screened in a quiet environment was honored mainly in the breach. Outdoor evening concerts consuming mighty masses of kilowatts were held right in back of the Old State House, and frequent sound checks during the day pummeled the video audio into oblivion. Deck operators had no separate cueing system, so patrons were served lavish portions of bars and tones. Worse, tapes were sometimes started in the middle. Even more worse, tapes were occasionally skipped altogether in order to maintain the printed schedule. Operators occasionally allowed tapes to run past programmed works—if a tape contained a subsequent but unlisted work, it thus made an appearance at the festival after all.

Video also appeared in the concert series and in installations. Film surfaced only in Phil Niblock's installation, and in transfers in the video show (Meredith Monk's *Ellis Island*). There were no entry fees charged or rentals paid. But participation was worthwhile because of the wide press coverage by major dailies and prominent periodicals. This has always been a strong feature of the festival—last year's garnered a full



*PM Magazine/Acid Rock*, by Dara Birnbaum, was among the tapes by women screened at Quebec's La Video Fameuse Fete.

page in *Newsweek*. Most press reviews, however, are written by music reporters wary of commenting on media outside their own expertise. Thus, film or video entries are not guaranteed of notice in print.

—Reynold Weidenaar

The 7th Annual New Music America will be held November 1-10, 1985, in Los Angeles. Guidelines are not yet published, but it is likely that videos and films oriented towards music, performance art or installation (as component or documentation) will be welcome. Entries are due November 1, 1984. Contact: New Music America, 849 S. Broadway, Suite 632, Los Angeles, CA 90014; tel. (213) 689-9446.

Reynold Weidenaar is currently writing a history of the Telharmonium, the first electric music synthesizer.

## Quebec: Video des Femmes

La Video Fameuse Fete is an annual Canadian film and video festival in Quebec City featuring works by and about women. Nineteen eighty-four was its eighth season, and the tenth anniversary of its sponsoring organization, Video Femmes, a feminist video production/distribution collective. Its work is recognized throughout Canada and abroad; some of its tapes are distributed by the Centre Simone de Beauvoir in France and by Circle in London.

I was invited to attend as a guest of honor last February and had a marvelous time. The screenings were well-attended and followed by heated discussions. The organizers had taken advertisements, both locally and nationally, broadly distributing a handsome poster and an impressive catalogue. The audiences included writers and critics from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Vancouver, British Columbia. The local papers printed daily listings, though their critical analyses were pointed more toward the performance artists who participated in this multi-arts festival. In addition to my own work (*Travels in the Combat Zone*), the festival screened works by U.S. producers Meryl Bronstein (*No Tollkeeper at the Gate*), Dara Birnbaum (*PM Magazine/Acid Rock*), Julie Harrison (*Cartoon Tape, I Forgot, and Clean Up*) and Lizzie Borden (*Born in Flames*). Several conferences and workshops discussed various aspects of film and video pro-

duction, including an examination of some of the latest video technology.

The festival staff, though overworked, was extremely helpful and hospitable, providing opportunities for private screenings and generally maintaining an enthusiastic and friendly atmosphere. I heartily recommend this festival for the gorgeous scenery and for the worthwhile contacts to be made with the Canadian sector. —Doris Chase

The festival is seeking 16mm and ¾" videotapes for 1985. The deadline is December, although the details have not yet been finalized. New works of any length will be accepted for selection, and the directors of the festival will be visiting AIVF this fall looking for work. If you are interested in submitting your work contact the AIVF festival bureau by phone or mail or Video Femmes directly at: 10, rue McMahon CH 3875, Quebec G1R 3S1 Canada; tel. (418) 692-3090.

Doris Chase is a video artist who lives in New York City.

## IN BRIEF

This month's festival's have been compiled by Robert Aaronson and Deborah Erickson. **Listings do not constitute an endorsement**, and since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

## Domestic

● **HEMISFILM '85**, Jan. 27-30. Now entering its 18th year, this festival enjoys a nice reputation, and receives good Texas and *Variety* press. Gordon Hitchens, who has been on the jury for several years, said, "The event is international, but heavy on Americans—about 60%. If anything, there are too many documentaries, and a shortage of high quality fiction." Screenings are held at St. Mary's University campus, and draw academic and general public audiences. Allen Mondell, whose film *West of Hester Street* won for best docudrama over 48 minutes in 1984, reported that festival director Louis Reile seems "earnest. They keep in touch, and return the print promptly." Other AIVF winners were: Mike Blackwood, special jury prize for *Beyond Utopia: American Architecture*; Carol Nelson and Ben Levin, special jury prize for *Limon Howe: High Class Moving Pictures*; Jacki Ochs and Dan Keller, best documentary in its time slot for *The Secret Agent*. Winners receive a bronze Hemisfilm medallion. No entry fee; festival pays return postage. Beta and VHS accepted for preview only. Deadline: Nov. 25. For entry forms contact: Hemisfilm '85 festival, IFACS, 1 Camino Santa Maria, San Antonio TX 78284, tel. (514) 436-3209; or call Gordon Hitchens in NY: (212) 877-6856.

● **POETRY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL**, Dec. 1 & 2. Ninth event seeks works wherein "images and words interact synergistically." 34 of 86 works were screened last year. Top two winners were Canadian: *Tales of the Vienna Woods* by Veronica Soul and *Waterworks* by Rick Hancox. 6 selected prints will be focus of college-circuit poetry workshops. No screen-



ing fees paid, but there is a "purchasing prize," i.e. the festival pays to make a copy of your work which it keeps in a public archive after the workshops. Still, no dollars for you. Entries in S-8, 16mm and ¾" accepted until Nov. 29. entry fee: \$5.00.; filmmaker pays all postage and insurance. Contact: The Poetry Workshop, Fort Mason Cultural Center, San Francisco CA 94123, tel. (415) 621-3073.

● **SCIENCE FILM FESTIVAL**, May. Established in 1947 by the American Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, in conjunction w/ its annual meeting, to be held in Los Angeles in 1985. No awards, but all selected films are listed w/ description and sale/rental info in conference catalogue distributed to app. 5,000 attending scientists, teachers, etc. Festival director James Angelo says social science films also accepted. 37 works were chosen from several hundred last year, including *The Great Horse-Shoe Crab Fieldtrip*, *Pink Foot* (about geese), and "Nova"'s *The Miracle of Life*. No entry fee; fest pays return postage. 16mm only, ¾" OK for preview. Deadline: Dec. 31. Contact: James A. Angelo, AAAS Science Film Festival, 1101 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005, tel. (202) 842-9529.

● **UNITED STATES FILM FESTIVAL**, Jan. 21-27, Park City, Utah. This festival will no doubt continue to be controversial. Since its 1977 inception, the event has been termed self-serving by some, congenial and socially conscious by others. A decision this year to discontinue video screenings is certain to widen the opinion gap.

The move is an effort to "consolidate the program," according to Jenny Walz of the Sundance Institute, the festival's sponsor. But the decision is disappointing given the resources of the Utah Media Center, and in light of managerial promises in recent



Marisa Silver's feature *Old Enough* was good enough to win the grand prize for best dramatic feature at the United States Film Festival.

years to maintain a "continued and substantial commitment to video in all future festivals." That dedication was apparently waning even last year—videos were not mentioned (outside of the title) in the glossy festival proram, which contained full descriptions of each film, along with lots of Utah tourism-hype. One fest attendee said that video was "presented sidebar-style; they really shoved it aside."

For filmmakers, however, especially those with social issue documentaries, this is a fine festival. AIVFs did well here last year, and had mostly good things to say about the event. Documentary jury prizes went to Jacki Ochs and Dan Keller's *The Secret Agent* and to *When The Mountains Tremble* (Pamela Yates, Thomas Sigel and Peter Kinoy). Honorable mentions

were awarded to *Seeing Red* (James Klein and Julia Reichert) and *The Good Fight* (Noel Buchner, Mary Dore, and Sam Sills). Grand prize documentary winner was *Style Wars* by Tony Silver.

Sam Sills said the festival presented a "very interesting, eclectic selection—a nice mix of features, fun and social issue works." *The Good Fight*'s honorable mention showed the festival's liberal leanings, he said. Sills viewed the event as a good chance to talk to journalists (*Variety*, the *Los Angeles Times* and many Utah papers attended), but wished for a better day-evening mix of screening times. Both he and Jacki Ochs said they enjoyed the luxury accommodations immensely—private ski lofts with Jacuzzis, great skiing.

The festival flies many filmmakers out instead of giving cash prizes and presents lectures and seminars that, according to Ochs, are "not terrific educationally for filmmakers, but are good for the general-public audiences." She said the fest did bring some interesting people for filmmakers, like marketing expert Jeff Dowd and Orion Classics distributors.

Orion picked up Marisa Silver's first feature *Old Enough*, the Grand Prize winner for dramatic features. The film, made for \$600,000 raised from private New York investors, was developed at the Sundance Institute through its Script Development Program. Silver said the fest "tried hard to scope indies" and was a "good place to premiere." She added, "People weren't just there for awards. It was a real forum for films."

The festival has received across-the-board criticism for "atrocious" and "horrendous" projection problems in both 35 and 16mm. Examples cited ranged from blurred, cut-off and misframed images to bizarre, screeching sound. Hopefully the sacrifice of video in 1985 will enable the festival to focus on better facilities for film.

## CALL FOR 'INDY' AWARD NOMINATIONS

In commemoration of AIVF's tenth anniversary, we are continuing the lost tradition of the **Indy Awards**, last given in 1977, which recognize and honor individuals, groups, and organizations who have advanced the field of independent film and video. These awards will be presented at our tenth anniversary gala to be held in February 1985.

Suggestions are welcome in (but not limited to) the following categories:

### Feature Film & Videomakers

### Documentary Film & Videomakers

### Technical Professionals (Editors, Cinematographers, Soundpeople, etc.)

### Funders (Individuals, Foundations, Corporations)

### Distributors

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### Exhibitors

### Arts Administrators/ Media Arts Centers

### Press/Critics/ Film & Video Writers

### Advocates

### Media Activists/ Members of Congress

### Film Users (Libraries/Educators)

### Experimental or Technical Innovators

### Others

Please include a brief statement explaining each nominee's contributions.

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At the time of this writing, no decision has been made about entry fees (\$30.00 last year), judges or definite deadlines. Contact (by Oct. 31): Jennifer Walz or Lory Smith, 19 Exchange Place, Salt Lake City UT 84111; tel. (801) 521-9330.—DE

• **WOMEN'S MID-ATLANTIC FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE**, March. Non-competitive event is part of larger, mostly invitational, Women in Film and Video Festival. First year for this component, focusing on works under 60 minutes from "local" women in DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA, WV and the District of Columbia. All genres welcome in ¾", 16 and 35mm. Screening panel of filmmakers, AFI staffers, museum folks. Festival hopes to bring in at least one rep from each state. No entry fee; you pay all postage and insurance. Nov. 1 entry deadline has been extended to Nov. 15 for AIVF members. Send films and tapes to: The American Film Institute, Attn: Susan Ivers, Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, Washington, DC 20566; for more info, contact Marian Oster at (202) 737-2400.

### Foreign

• **AVORIAZ FANTASY FILM FESTIVAL**, January. Mostly major thriller-chiller competition enters its 13th year. *The Twilight Zone* and ABC's *The Day After* were among the mainstream reps in the 1983 event, which was generally bemoaned as mediocre and boring. Awards were a double Dutch surprise: grand prize went to Dick Maas' evil-elevator flick, *The Lift*, while the jury's special award went to Paul Verhoeven's *The Fourth Man*. Celeb-judged events draws often too-large crowds, int'l press. No entry fee; entrant pays all postage. Entries must be in 35mm (French or subtitled, only) accepted through December. Contact: Promo 2000 Society, 33 Avenue MacMahon, 75017 Paris, France; tel. (1) 755-7140.

• **BONN EXPERIMENTAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL**, Dec. 8-9. Sixth event seeks experimental films of less than 20 minutes in all film formats. Selected films (50 of 150 in 1983) will be paid for one screening; plans are for a per-minute rate for longer works and a set fee for shorter ones. By entering, you agree to the television broadcast of portions of your film. Co-director Frank Zander is excited about receiving American entries, and promises safe return of the prints. He will accept typed copy of your film's vital statistics, since

time factors won't permit handling of entry forms. Information (including a brief summary, suitable for use in the festival catalogue) must be received by Oct. 29; prints must arrive no later than Nov. 5. If you wish, your film will be part of a bulk shipment to another experimental festival in Osnabrueck immediately following this event. Contact: Filmgruppe Die Einstellung, c/o Frank Zander, Reuterstrasse 35, 53 Bonn 1, West Germany; tel. (011) 49. 228. 216127.

• **EXPLORE CANADA TRAVEL FILM AWARDS**, February. My reason for exploring Canada is obvious: Gary Carter, the Montreal Expo's catcher and super-slugger can be seen, in the flesh, at Olympic Stadium. (The man is playing some ball this year.) Perhaps you would make the trip for some other reason, a reason so inspiring you've made a film about why *everyone* should "come on up." Well, this festival is for you. It's sponsored by the Travel Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) to encourage tourism. The best film gets a Maple Leaf Award, runner-up receives the Canuck [sic] Award. No entry fee. Deadline: December. Contact: TIAC, Suite 1016, 130 Albert St., Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4, Canada. Tel. (613) 238-3883.—DE

• **LA PLAGNE**, Dec. 13-16. A "real life adventure" film festival, sponsored by the Guild Europeene du Raid. The Guild is a French organization which promotes the spirit of adventure in youth through a variety of programs, including annual festivals in Dinard, Montpellier and Luchon. La Plagne seeks films and videos about physical challenges (hang-gliding, free climbing or ballooning, for instance), expeditions in remote areas, athletics and team sports. Last year AIVF collected 14 works at the request of co-directors Michel Auffray and Sylvie Barbe. None of those were selected, but in a recent phone conversation, Barbe said the festival is very interested in American independents for 1984. If your film or tape is about real life adventure, it's probably worth entering here. According to Barbe, an award "will sell the work to French television." No entry fee; fest pays return postage. Deadline: Nov. 15; producers must send a copy of the script and three photos. Bon chance! Contact: Michel Auffray or Sylvie Barbe, Guild Europeene du Raid, 11 rue de Vaugirard, 75006, Paris, France; tel. (1) 326. 97. 52. ■

### Watkins (continued from page 24)

or your friends or your families, and you get great waves of satisfaction, or whatever you get. Then you move onto the next film. But that living celluloid or videotape is being put into a can and sent away to all these people you'll never meet. It's going to have an effect on people; it may change their thinking; it may change their lives. You don't hear much about that. You don't relate to that process.

I find the usual process pretty horrifying, and I'm really looking forward to working with families without a centralized script, and I'm looking forward to showing the film publicly. I'm hoping it will send tremors through certain sections of the media. Part of the media's way of not dealing with the public is to make production a secretive, elitist process. The professional does everything. He or she writes it, films it, and there's no relationship at all with the receivers. My god, there are as many possible ways of making film as there blades of grass. But the media still clings virtually to one form, the theatrical mode, which has become a form of political constraint, of political power.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>In February 1984, WCNY in Syracuse, New York, the local PBS affiliate, tried and failed to get permission to broadcast *The War Game*.

<sup>2</sup>Ken Nolley, "The Collapse of Watkins' Nuclear War Film," *Literature/Film Quarterly*, Vol. XI, No. 4 (1983), pp. 234-236. This issue also includes Watkins's own "The Fear of Commitment" and an interview with Watkins, by Lester Friedman, recorded in 1978.

Scott MacDonald is the acting coordinator for the upstate New York section of this project; its address is: Box 538, New Hartford, N.Y. 13413. In the Pacific Northwest, contact: Suzanne Tedesko and Bill Affolter, 2157 Boyer Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98112; or Ken and Jan Nolley, 3358 Pringle Rd. S.E., Salem, OR 97302. A full-time contact in Sweden is: Catharina Bragee, Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, Brankyrhagatan 76, S-117 23, Stockholm. ■

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Scott MacDonald teaches at Utica College, Utica, New York, and has written on independent film for such publications as *Film Quarterly*, *Film Culture*, and *Afterimage*.



## NOTICES

Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others included as space permits. Send Notices to Mary Guzzy, THE INDEPENDENT, c/o FIVE, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012. For further info, call (212) 473-3400. Deadline: 8th of second preceding month (e.g., October 8 for December issue). Edited by Claudia Gomez.

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● **FOR SALE:** French acl #907; 2 200' mags, 12-120 Angenieux, 3 batts, charger, filters, diopters, case. Only 20,000' run through. Miller pro sr & legs included. Perfect, \$4,500. Call, leave message: (212) 222-5805, N.Y.

● **FOR SALE:** Arri-S, 2 motors, 400' mag & torque, Prime Schneiders 10mm, 25mm, 50mm, current viewfinder, sync pulse generator (internal), case, 2 batts, cables & many accessories. Excellent condition, \$2,500. Also, Bolex H16 Rex4, 3 switar 10, 16, 25 all rx. Mint condition, \$1,250. Call: (914) 876-7385, NY or (201) 420-0615, NJ.

● **FOR SALE:** JVC 1900 3 tube camera, \$2,500. Crosspoint latch portable SEG (6118) "Pixie," \$1,500. JVC "tape handler" edit system, CR 6600U, CR 8200U, RM 88U, \$4,500. Knox 128 B character gen., \$3,000. Panasonic color sync gen., \$400. Contact: Roughcut Video Services, 129 W. 22 St., NY NY 10011, (212) 242-1914.

● **FOR SALE:** Beaulieu super-8 camera S2008; 8-1 Angenieux zoom lens, variable speeds, auto or manual aperture. \$499. Contact: Cathy Zheutlin, (213) 828-2525, CA.

● **FOR RENT:** Video deck, ¾" playback & color TV. \$35/day. Contact: Mary, (212) 473-3400, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** 6-plate Steenbeck editing room, fully equipped incl. telephone. Special rates for independents. Contact: Bob Mack Productions, (212) 736-3074, NY.

● **FOR RENT IN NICARAGUA:** Sony M-3 camera, 4800 deck, monitor, tripod, mikes, lighting. Reasonable rates for equip & cameraperson; crew as needed. Contact: Gabrielle Baur, Christina Konrad c/o Veronica Pfranger, Instituto Historico Centro Americo, Managua, Nicaragua; tel. phone 72572.

● **FOR RENT:** Nagra III, crystal sync, adapted for 7½" reels, case, AC adaptor. Excellent condition. Reservation & deposit required. Contact: Theresa Weedy, (212) 447-3280, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Broadcast ENG gear w/ Ikegami HL83, Sony BVU 110 w/time code, lights, mikes, Sasadler tripod. International crew for local rates. Contact: Lisa, Metro Video, (212) 267-8221, 608-6005, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony 366 reel-to-reel 7" tape deck. Quartertrack stereo, 3 heads, new belts, rollers, playback head, edit feature. Nagra compatible. Best offer. Call (212) 548-2875 evenings 6-10 pm, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** New Sony M-3 camera w/3 tubes; BVU 110 or 4800 deck; batteries, monitor, tripod, mikes & Lowell lighting. Very portable. Reasonable rates for equipment & cameraperson; crew as needed. Contact: Alan, (212) 222-3321; Caryn, (212) 222-6748, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Moviola M86 flatbed editor, flicker-free prism, low wow & flutter, quick stop circuit, torque motor box. 3 yrs. old, excellent condition. Fair price. Contact: Ron, (617) 354-6054, MA.

● **FOR SALE:** 6-plate Steenbeck; old but good, rebuilt w/additional amplifier & speaker: \$6000 or best offer. Call: (212) 765-8860, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Ikegami HL-79A, BVU 110, lights, mikes, insurance. \$450/day. Radio mikes, car, sunglasses, crew additional as required. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** State-of-the-art 16mm film equipment at incredibly low rates. Call: (212) 222-6699, NY.

### Conferences • Seminars

● **NORTH AMERICAN TV INSTITUTE:** Basic hands-on video production workshops. Nov. 6-9 & 13-16 at Tarrytown NY. Combines instruction & application in production of video program, basic theory, skills necessary to produce single-camera TV production. Learn to edit ¾" videotape w/ state-of-the-art equip. \$695/ person for 4-day session includes workbook, reference materials, refreshments. Contact: NA TV, In House Seminars, Knowledge Industry Publications Inc., 701 Westchester Ave., White Plains NY 10604.

● **COLOR VIDEO WORKSHOPS AT DCTV:** Classes in color video production; camera & editing. Emphasis on hands-on training. \$60 for 4 sessions on Monday nights, 6:30-9:30. Contact: Willie Crawford, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., NY NY 10013, (212) 966-4510.

● **BASIC HANDS-ON VIDEO PRODUCTION WORKSHOPS:** 4-day sessions to be held Oct. 23-26 in Kansas City, Nov. 6-9 in Atlanta, Dec. 4-7 in LA. Workshop attendees awarded Continuing Education Units (CEUs); CEUs accepted as credit by employers, certification & licensing agencies, professional associations. Contact: Sheila Alper, (914) 354-4814, NY.

● **NY PUBLIC LIBRARY ANIMATION WORKSHOPS:** Featuring films & art works of independent animator Judi Fogelman. 90-minute program to be at 10 branch libraries in Manhattan, Bronx, Staten Island from Oct. 10-Nov. 15. Screenings & workshops free; special programs for senior citizens scheduled. For schedule or more info., contact: Elaine Landau, NYPL, (212) 340-0913, or Judi Fogelman, (212) 840-1234, NY.

● **POSTPONED:** International exhibition of contemporary art by women, "Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn," will

(continued on page 36)

important important important important important

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## INDIE FEATURE NEWS

Distributor Whit Stillman of Stillman International in New York has been bitten by the "producer bug" after becoming involved with the production of the independent feature film, *Skyline*. Originally, Stillman had acted as international sales representative for *Skyline's* director, Fernando Colomo of Madrid. When Colomo came to the US to produce a low-budget film, Stillman found himself working as associate producer on the project. The \$140,000 comedy depicts the misadventures of a Spanish photographer seeking ever-elusive fame and fortune in the New York City art world, and is based on Colomo's own experiences trying to realize a film project in America's favorite cultural mecca. *Skyline* was a critical hit at the New Directors/New Films festival in New York this past spring and has since opened theatrically in Manhattan and Europe.

Stillman says that because director Colomo and his cinematographer Angel Luis Fernandez had worked together on several projects, they were able to adjust easily to problem situations in an unfamiliar setting. And Stillman observed that Colomo avoided the common mistake of heavy-handed direction, allowing his actors to improvise much of the dialogue, and to play themselves. *Skyline* will reopen in New York at the Film Forum II in October and Stillman plans to begin filming his own feature film project this winter, with projected completion date in the early spring of 1985.

## INDIES ROCK

Rock 'n' roll is a hot subject these days. New Jersey producer David Davidson is currently producing a video docudrama on the life of independent rock 'n' roll producer Harry Glenn. The 60-minute tape, entitled *Another Glenn in Orbit*, is being shot in New York and Indiana.

Harry Glenn worked as a welder in the Indiana shipyards, but his real passion was promoting new recording artists with a car trunk full of records pressed on credit and an up-and-coming young musician accompanying him on cross-country trips to TV and radio stations, county fairs and roadhouses. Though he never struck it rich like other independent promoters of the '50s and early '60s, Glenn was a man "addicted to the scam, the very act of promotion itself," according to Davidson. "On his road trips, Glenn was free to become this larger-than-life character; that was his little piece of the American Dream."

Davidson has created an imaginary program called "The Harry Glenn Show," with actor Scott Frank playing Glenn and several other New York actors making "guest appearances" as original Mar-Val Record artists. *Another Glenn in Orbit* received fund-

ing from the National Endowment for the Arts/American Film Institute Mid-Atlantic Fellowship program and is scheduled for release in January 1985.

If you didn't get your fill of sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll from *Purple Rain*, *Savage Beliefs* may be the movie for you. Newly formed Beehive Productions of Chicago hopes to have the feature ready for distributor previews late this year. The project called "a rock 'n' roll thriller," is the cinema debut of the Chicago-based rock group Savage Beliefs, and also marks the second collaboration of producer Lynn Burnstan, writer-director Charles Fink and cinematographer Richard Wargo, who previously worked together on the Houston International Festival-winner *Door to Door*. *Savage Beliefs* will be blown up from 16 to 35mm for theatrical release. With its story of a love triangle, cocaine and murder, writer Fink says that, "this picture has a lot of things in it that people are gonna wanna [sic] see."

What do AIVF member Stephen Jon Lewicki, punk rock star Madonna and the Brooklyn Bridge have in common? All are involved in *A Certain Sacrifice*, a bizarre story of urban terror and ritual barbarism. Soon to be released worldwide to clubs, television and on home videocassette, *A Certain Sacrifice* is billed as a "comedy-musical about two New York post-punk lovers and the triumphant human sacrifice they stage for their arch enemy." When slumlord Raymond Hall (Charles Kurtz) throws Dashiell (Jeremy Pattinosh) out of his apartment and rapes Bruna (played by Madonna), the star-crossed lovers seek blood revenge. Gathering her three former sex slaves, Bruna hijacks a limo, kidnaps Raymond and hauls him before Dashiell in an eerie Brooklyn Bridge setting for the climactic act of vengeance.

Lewicki, who began making the film five years ago, financed it and did much of the principal photography. He originated the work in Super-8 and transferred it to 1" video for editing. Total budget: approximately \$12,000. *A Certain Sacrifice* marks the acting debut of Madonna, the directorial debut of Lewicki and the video club debut of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Ex-Independent Feature Project staffer Paul Smart has teamed up with Alexandre Rockwell (*Hero*) to produce Rockwell's new feature *Cheat N' Heart*, to be completed early in 1985. Smart spent the summer in Europe arranging financing for the project described as "a modern-day western fable."

## DOCUMENTARY TALK

Three years in the making, Daedalus Productions' hour-long documentary *America and Lewis Hine* will premiere at the New York Film Festival and be shown on Thursday, October 18 at 10 pm on WNET's "Non-Fiction Television" series. Hine, the pioneer social photographer, recorded unforgettable images of immigrants at Ellis Island, child labor, industrial and migrant workers of the 1920s and the construction of the Empire State Building. Rare Hine photos, archival footage and interviews with an ironworker who helped build the Empire State Building are set to narration read by Jason Robards and Maureen Stapleton.

*America and Lewis Hine* was written by Daniel V. Allentuck, directed by Nina Rosenblum and edited by Lora Hays, Gerald Donlan and Maurice Schell. The project received support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Polaroid Foundation, Agfa-Gevaert and the Joint Foundation, Inc./Women Director's Fund.

When he tried to photograph New York's

Courtesy Filmmaker



One vision of the pioneer social photographer Lewis Hine.



Courtesy Adair Films



Protestors attempting to block the entrance to Lawrence Livermore Lab in *Stopping History*.

Hell's Kitchen area in 1903, Lewis Hine was met with suspicious residents throwing stones. More than 80 years later, filmmakers Maren and Reed Erskine have managed to capture the image of this reticent, often-eccentric neighborhood in *Hell's Kitchen Chronicle*, a 60-minute color documentary exploring what some refer to as "the last neighborhood in Manhattan." Interviews with long-time dwellers in Hell's Kitchen, now known as "Clinton" to real estate developers and urban gentry, reveal a tough, diverse population of theater people, varied ethnic groups, street gangs, low-income and elderly residents, and other urban survivors who are fighting displacement by developers with a feisty tenacity.

The Erskines worked on *Hell's Kitchen Chronicle* for several years, with funding from the American Film Institute and the National Endowment for the Arts. A 1984 winner at the Athens International Film Festival and recently invited to participate in the Toronto Festival of Festivals, *Hell's Kitchen Chronicle* can be seen in New York in Barnard College's Works by Women series on Friday, October 12 at 7:30 pm and at the Museum of Modern Art on Tuesday, October 30 at 2:30 pm and 6 pm.

### SERIOUS STUFF

For those who don't really think it's funny when the President of the United States jokingly announces on national radio that he's just authorized the bombing of the Soviet Union, there is *Stopping History* from Adair Films, a one-hour documentary exploring changing perspectives of Americans beginning to question the development and deployment of nuclear weapons. Director Peter Adair followed a group of protestors over a month's time as they prepared for a massive demonstration at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, 40 miles from San Francisco. Interspersed with footage of the protestors are poignant interviews with people who are unsure of the best

way to respond to these weapons, struggling with such difficult questions as personal ethical responsibility and whether traditional protest methods are effective. *Stopping History* was produced by Cathryn Keller, Gayle Peabody and Haney Armstrong in cooperation with the San Francisco public TV station, KQED. It was broadcast nationally on many PBS stations in May and June of this year.

From Documentaries for Learning of Boston comes a new film for the classroom and the general public, *Breaking the Silence: The Generation After the Holocaust*, a 58-minute color film which explores the concerns of Jewish children of Nazi Holocaust survivors. Many support groups for children of survivors have formed since the mid-1970s, and *Breaking the Silence* follows members of one such group as they try to open a discussion on the Holocaust and its aftereffects with their parents. Directed by Dr. Edward A. Mason and co-produced by Mason with Eva Fogelman and associate producer Dr. Henry Greenebaum, the film was shot and edited by Boston independent Ben Achtenberg, and was screened at the American Film Festival in New York last May.

Esti Galili Marpet's half-hour documentary *The West Bank: Whose Promised Land?* was aired on PBS stations in Chicago and New York this past summer. The tape is an on-the-scene report of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict over the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and includes interviews with Israeli settlers, Palestinian intellectuals and Israeli peace activists opposed to Israel's annexation policies. Just prior to the PBS summer broadcasts, Marpet told *The Independent* that it had been difficult to get PBS to air the tape because it questioned Israel's policy toward the Palestinians. "But the point of the work is pro-peace, not pro-Palestinian," Marpet, an Israeli-American, said. She noted that timely articles raising similar questions by such foreign policy observers as *New York Times* writers Flora and Anthony Lewis may have encouraged increased interest in the tape. *The West Bank: Whose Promised Land?* was awarded best documentary citations from the Athens International Festival and the Atlanta Film/Video Festival.

### EXPLORATIONS

After a year in production, Polish filmmaker Slawomir Grunberg has completed *My American Dream*, a 10-part series of 20- and 30-minute segments on the people of Cincinnati and nearby Kentucky. The series began a 10-week run on cable stations in that area last June. Each episode is a documentary portrait of a unique individual's personal American dream. A group of people, from a go-go dancer to a Quaker to a collector of army tanks, helps the filmmaker define his

own American dream. Warner Amex Community Programming Department, Four C's Cable Access Corporation and Storer Cable contributed equipment and services. Grunberg had been visiting the United States when martial law was declared in Poland, and was advised by friends there not to return because he had made films for Solidarity. Unable to pursue his ambitions in his homeland, Grunberg has produced a work about a diverse group of Americans who do.

The Cunningham Dance Foundation has added a new work to its already impressive collection of dance films. *Coast Zone*, choreographed by Merce Cunningham and directed by Charles Atlas, was filmed in the Synod House of the immense Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. The 30-minute, 16mm color film continues the Cunningham/Atlas exploration of the interaction between choreographed motion and the camera. Cunningham has pioneered the translation of performing arts to film and video since the early 1970s. Atlas, the company's resident filmmaker, has worked with Cunningham since they made the 48-minute *Walkaround Time* in 1973. ■

Courtesy Merce Cunningham Dance Company



Exploring form and function: Charles Atlas' film of Merce Cunningham's choreography.



## INDEPENDENT BOOKSHELF

Don't look any further for essential media tomes. These titles are available at AIVF.

**The Independent Film & Video Makers Guide**

by Michael Wiese, \$14.95

**How To Prepare Budgets for Film & Video**

by Michael Wiese, \$14.95

**Motion Picture, TV & Theatre Directory**

Motion Picture Enterprises, \$5.95

**Selected Issues in Media Law**

by Michael F. Mayer, \$2.50

**Get The Money & Shoot**

By Bruce Jackson, \$15.00

**Copyright Primer**

By Joseph B. Sparkman, \$3.50

**Independent Feature Film Production**

By Gregory Goodell, \$7.95

**Beyond Video: Media Alliance Directory I**

Media Alliance, \$2.50

**Film & Video Service Profiles**

Center for Arts Information,

\$5.00 (film), \$6.75 (video)

**THE AIVF Guide to Distributors**

Wendy Lidell, Mary Guzzu,

\$7.00 members, \$8.95 non-members

**ShipShape Shipping**

Wendy Lidell, Victoria Cammarota, \$3.00

## Notices

(continued from page 33)

not take place in Oct. 1984. New date: May/June 1985.

● **SMPTE TECHNICAL CONFERENCE & EQUIP. EXHIBIT:** Will focus on future of Image Technology. Seminar includes new lighting equip. & techniques, videotape duplicating, film resolution using TV methods. Oct 29-Nov. 2, daily conference registration fee: \$70. Contact: SMPTE, 862 Scarsdale Ave., Scarsdale NY 10583.

● **SMALL COMPUTERS IN THE ARTS:** Symposium Oct. 25-28, Philadelphia. Includes workshops, research presentations, film shows, exhibits dealing w/ application of small computers in the arts. Contact: Symposium on Small Computers in the Arts, Box 1954, Philadelphia PA 19105.

## Editing Facilities

● **EDITING/POST-PRODUCTION FACILITY:** Modest rates, arts-oriented editors, conducive ambience. Equip. provides sophisticated, small format, cuts-only editing; available 24 hrs., 7 days. Contact: Electronic Arts Intermix, (212) 989-2316, NY.

● **STV VIDEO PRODUCTIONS** offers ¾" editing w/ editor at special AIVF member prices. System includes JVC-8250 recorder & 5550 player w/ vertical interval head switching & FM-dub, RM-86U controller, Panasonic WJ-4600 special effects, etc. North Jersey location, 40 min. drive from NYC. Contact: Dean Stevens, (201) 721-4067, N.J.

● **BEST DEAL IN NY:** Ultra-modern, air-conditioned video editing/16 track sound-mixing facility w/ friendly & professional staff (including international award-winning music composer). Special off-hour deals w/ indie video & filmmakers. Conference room, garden, full kitchen, private bath. Contact: Mike Gayle, (212) 242-6007, NY.

● **OFF LINE ON COST EDITING:** New high-speed equip. Fully computerized edit decision, list management w/ printout. Rough cuts, clip reels, window dubs, time coding available. Quiet cool editing room; everything \$20/hr. Contact: Bob Wiegand, (212) 925-6059, NY.

● **EDITING POST** offers ¾" editing at \$50/hr. w/ editor. System includes JVC CR-8250 recorder w/ vertical interval head switching & balanced audio inputs (broadcast standards), Chyron VP-1 graphics, time base correction & full time code capability, including window dubs. Discounts for longer projects. Convenient midtown NY location; 24-hr., 7-day access. Book time M-F, 10am-6pm. Contact: Gerry Pallor, (212) 757-4220, NY.

● **UPPER WEST SIDE STEENBECK RENTAL:** 8-plate or 6-plate. Reasonable rates. Call: (212) 874-7444, NY.

● **STEENBECKS FOR RENT:** Moderately priced by the month. Delivered to your workspace. Prompt repairs included. Call: Paul, (212) 316-2913, NY.

● **LARGE COMFORTABLE EDITING ROOM** w/ KEM 8-plate Universal; editing table, 16mm & 35mm, rewinds, bins, splicers, synchronizers, private phone; additional office space available. Midtown location. Contact: Errol Morris Films, 1697 Broadway, NY NY 10019, (212) 757-7478/582-4045.

● **REGULAR & S-8 FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER:** Professional quality, industrial or broadcast, much better than you've seen before. Contact: Landy, 400 E. 83 St. #4A, NY NY 10028, (212) 734-1402.

● **SONY BVU ¾" EDITING:** \$25/hr. w/ editor. Call: (212) 242-2320, NY.

● **MOVIOLA M-77s FOR RENT:** \$500/mo. in your workspace. 15% discount to AIVF members. Contact: Philmaster Productions, (212) 873-4470, NY.

● **BRODSKY & TREADWAY S-8 & 8MM FILM-TO-VIDEO TRANSFER MASTERS:** Scene-by-scene density & total color correction, variable speed & freeze frame, sound from any source. Artists & broadcasters like our work. By appointment only. Call (617) 666-3372, MA.

● **LARGE EDIT ROOM** w/6-plate Steenbeck. Windows, carpet, phone, access to video deck, copy machine, etc. Contact: Bob McBride, Earthrise, 330 W. 42 St., NY NY 10036, (212) 594-6967.

● **VIDEO EDITING & TIME CODING:** ¾" hi-speed video editing on new JVC 8250 w/ convergence control. \$20/\$30 per hour. Low rates for time coding & time code editing. Contact: Inpoint Productions, (212) 679-3172, NY.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

● **NON-PROFIT INTERNATIONAL INFO** distribution network seeks videotapes in fields of ecology, Third World cultures, social issues, appropriate technologies, cultural survival, nuclear issues, computer teleconference, co-evolution, cooperative economics, environmental science. Send list & format. Contact: Earth Project, 297 W. 12 St., NY NY 10014.

● **CAMPUS NETWORK**, TV network broadcasting exclusively to colleges & universities, is now accepting ¾" videos for programming. If accepted, will pay for one-week exhibition period. Contact: Campus Network, c/o Steve Amateur, 114 Fifth Ave., NY NY 10011, (212) 206-1953.

● **CHANNEL 35**, San Francisco State University's cable TV, solicits work by independents. Info packet available. Contact: Special Programs, BCA Dept. SFSU, 1600 Holloway, San Francisco CA 94132.

● **WNYC TV/31**, NYC's public TV station, seeks films, videos, TV programs for prime-time airing. Especially interested in programs "that speak to cultural diversity unique to NYC." Unsolicited materials welcome. Contact: WNYC, Program Acquisition Dept., 1 Centre St., NY NY 10027, (212) 669-7800.

● **TV-NIGHT EXERCISES:** Swedish television project based on artist videotapes seeks materials. Payment for all works broadcast. Send short U-matic screening cassette, include phone number & address. Cassettes will be returned after completion of screening and/or broadcast. Contact: Nattovning, Peter R. Meyer, GA/E5, Swedish Television 2, 105 10, Stockholm, Sweden.

## Freelancers

● **VIDEOGRAPHER & CREW** available for your cable syndication projects. Complete 2 camera remote, in-studio production/post-production facilities available. North Jersey location, 40 minutes from NYC. Contact: Dean Stevens, (201) 721-4067, NJ.

● **VIDEOGRAPHER** available w/ state-of-the-art equip. Creative, professional, reasonable. Any location, any occasion. Contact: AB Video Productions, (212) 206-8296, NY.

● **ADDICTED TO HELPING VIDEO ARTISTS** of all kinds w/ English as a second language (like myself) to learn of the fine art of video production? I am. Will relocate worldwide. 13 yrs. of references; resume available. \$2 for printing & handling; ¾" U-matic NTSC demo tape, \$30. Contact: Georges Lessard, 3479 Stanley St. #12, Montreal Quebec Canada H3A 1S2, (514) 845-8577.

● **ASST PICTURE EDITOR** W/ studio/feature experience, dialogue & efx editing experience, available for features, shorts, docs. Will relocate, go on location. Contact: Craig Boyajian, (313) 425-4167, MI.

● **APPRENTICE/ASST EDITOR:** 5 yrs. experience in film, TV. Would like to work in postproduction. Will work for low pay in exchange for experience. Call (212) 741-3227, NY.

● **PUBLICIST/ASST PRODUCER:** Assist in casting, development, marketing, labor negotiations, media relations, distribution arrangements, publicity. Contact: Ray, (201) 756-0455, NJ.

● **FILM EDITOR:** 3 yrs experience in 35 & 16mm; all aspects sound & picture. Projects have included TV drama series, docs, commercials, award-winning



music videos. Show-reel, resume available. Contact: Desiree Heynacker, (212) 475-6634 or leave message at (212) 242-3900, ext. 215, NY.

● **TEXAS CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/ Aaton 7 LTR camera package available. 10 yrs. experience in news, docs, commercials as well as extensive video experience. Contact: Gary Watson, (713) 568-2790, TX.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** w/ Arri 16SR fast lenses & lights. Fluent in French, Spanish. Negotiable rates. Contact: Pedro Bonilla, (213) 454-8909, CA.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** for low-budget features. Contact: Felix Parnell, (212) 759-9216, NY.

● **FILM COMPOSER AVAILABLE:** Experience w/ strong classical background; teaches film composing at Manhattan School of Music & School of Visual Arts. Contact: Ed Green, (212) 533-4303, NY.

● **SCRIPT SUPERVISOR** available to work on independent features & shorts. Contact: Mindy Rodman, (212) 636-1426, NY.

● **PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT:** Can offer assistance in development, publicity campaigns, developing marketing & promotional materials. Contact: Kristen Simone, (212) 289-8299, NY.

● **VIDEOGRAPHER** w/ new Sony DXC-M3 3-tube camera ready to shoot docs, dance & other projects. Deck, mikes, accessories & crew as needed; rates negotiable. Contact: L. Goodsmith, (212) 989-8157, NY.

● **GAFFER** available for docs, low-budget features & shorts. 12 yrs. experience in theater, video & film. Contact: Chris, (212) 499-3219, NY.

● **ASST ART DIRECTOR** currently freelancing in print seeks work in production design. Some film experience. Resume, portfolio available. Contact: Eva, (212) 724-3879, NY.

● **CAMERA ASSISTANT** w/ Aaton 7 LTR for hire. Lighting & grip package available. Contact: John, (914) 473-0633, NY.

● **RESEARCHER:** Access & familiarity w/ all NYC libraries & Library of Congress in DC. Efficient & meticulous w/ background in history, political economy & filmmaking. Rate negotiable. Contact: Danny, (212) 924-4711, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** specializing in Hispanic subjects, US or Latin America, available for documentary. Fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Russian, English OK, too. CP GSMO, lights, sound, editing facilities. Based in Santa Fe. Contact: Pachon Lane, PO Box 266, Cerrillos NM 87010, (505) 471-2176.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/ 15 yrs. experience in 35mm & 16mm interested in independent fiction films. Fluent in French. Contact: Babette Mangolte, (212) 925-6329, NY.

● **AWARD-WINNING CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/ over 10 yrs. film & video experience ready for work on docs, low-budget features & shorts. 16mm film & broadcast 3-tube plumbicon w/ 3/4" broadcast deck. Lighting, grips, mikes, accessories & crew as needed. Professional credits & tape on request. Lowest rates in town. Contact: Val Galperin, Image House, (212) 863-7298/344-6676, NY.

ticello is searching for a crew for his new feature docudrama. Travel in his sailboat "Romance" from NY to Tahiti & around South America. 2-3 month commitment in winter 84-85. Good pay & expenses. Send info. Contact: Roberto Monticello, PO Box 372, Village Station NY 10014.

● **NEW COMMUNITY CINEMA** seeks American independent film/filmmakers for in-person appearances for 84-85 regularly scheduled year-round nightly repertory program. In Huntington LI, 1-hr. train ride from NYC. Contact: Charlotte Sky & Vic Skolnick, New Community Cinema, PO Box 490, Huntington NY 11743, (516) 423-7610, 423-7619.

● **WOMEN FILMMAKERS:** *Sojourner*, Cambridge-based women's journal w/ national readership, wants to publicize films by/about women. Particularly interested in issues of interest to women &/or feminist films. Also, if your film is going to be shown in Boston area, we can arrange for interview, profile, etc. Contact: Susan Shapiro, Film Editor, c/o *Sojourner*, 143 Albany St., Cambridge MA 02139.

● **QUALITY SCREENPLAYS WANTED** for 1985 production. All scripts must be registered w/ WGA. Primarily interested in realistic dramas & comedies; no horror or exploitation films. Send synopsis, script & self-address stamped envelope. Contact: Rhyolite Films Inc., PO Box 313, Prince Station, NY NY 10012.

● **INSTRUCTOR WANTED** for intensive CMX workshop. Must be highly qualified w/ teaching experience as well as have good working knowledge of CMX. \$300/day. Contact: John Godfrey or Willie Crawford, c/o Electric Film, (212) 966-4510, NY.

● **VIDEO PRODUCTION COMPANY** is looking for a few good people w/ experience in all phases of video production & sales to form a production company. Must have art as well as real-world money-making background. Send letter &/or resume. Contact: HaSH Prod., 211 W. 56 St., Ste., 35-L, NY NY 10019.

● **TV SCRIPT COMPETITION:** Sponsored by Access for Youth to promote creative writing of children's TV programming by adults. Cash prizes, youth participation award, winning scripts to be aired on Austin, TV cablevision. Deadline Oct. 14. Contact: Vicky Stafford, Access for Youth, 1516 Desert Quail, Austin TX 78758, (512) 835-2340.

● **FILM PROGRAMMER/EDUCATOR WANTED:** Will be responsible for programming & administering exhibition of 8 films/month, program notes, visiting filmmaker series, community outreach & public relations, developing lecture/discussion program on art of film & beginning film workshop program. Send resume/inquiries. Contact: Arnie Malina, Exec. Dir. Helena Film Society, 9 Placer St., Helena MT 59601, (406) 443-0287.

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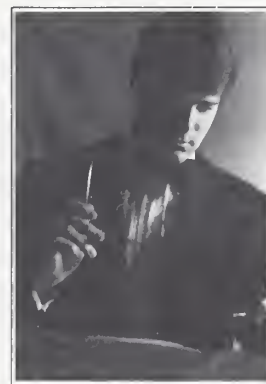
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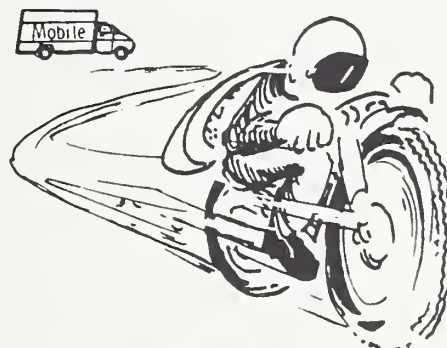
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## Trims • Glitches

● **15 PROJECTS AWARDED FUNDS** by CPB for third open solicitation round. Congratulations to AIVF members Frank Blythe, John de Graaf, Mirra Bank, Perin Ireland. Other winners include: Arthur Cromwell, Charles Sessoms, Samuel D. Pollard, Stanley Karnow, Andrew Pearson, Rick Tejada-Flores, Melinda Ward. William Miles, David Loxton, Clay Nixon, John L. Wilhelm, Morton Silverstein, Alvin H. Perlmutter, Don Mischer, Joseph Russin, John Coney, Paul Espinosa.

● **"ROAR" HONORED IN ZAGREB:** Congratulations to AIVF member Flip Johnson, whose film *The Roar From Within* received the Special Jury Award for Graphic Art at World Festival of Animation in Yugoslavia.

● **"LEAF DANCE" AWARDED:** Kudos to AIVF member Judi Fogelman, who took Third Best Independent Film Award at Canadian Int'l Du Film D'Art. Fogelman's animated film is part of Donnell Media Center Collection at NY Public Library.

● **MASSACHUSETTS FOUNDATION FOR HUMANITIES & PUBLIC POLICY** has awarded a grant to Green Mountain Post Films to produce a series of forums in MA featuring its film *The Secret Agent*. The award-winning doc focuses on Agent Orange & Vietnam vets.

● **CONGRATULATIONS TO NY FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS** grant winner & AIVF member Leo Hurwitz. Others awarded grants include Frank Boehm, Manfred Kirscheimer, Rosetta Reiz, Andrea Weiss.

● **FILMSEARCH STIPEND RECIPIENTS** include AIVF members Maria De Luca, Peggy Stern, Randi Hoffman, Lorraine Miller, Nancy Salzer, Mike Negroponte & Margot Schaal. Congratulations as well to John Block, Bob Demyan, Hunter Yoder, Susan Kouguell, Ernie Marrero, Vinnie Giordano, Sandy Moore, Fred Charney, Adam Zucker, Ross Barnes, Nick Zedd, Michael Brownlee, Ron Kienhuis, Chris Kraus.

● **NEA AWARDS AIVF MEMBER** Jaime Barrios \$20,000 for his film on Chilean-American artist, Matta, who influenced Abstract Expressionists in the 1940s.

● **BLUE RIBBON AWARD** at the American Film Festival to AIVF members Bestor Cram & Deborah Luisi for their film *How Far Home: Veterans After Vietnam*.

● **JEROME FOUNDATION OF MINNESOTA** has awarded production grants totaling \$116,138 to AIVF members Anne Flournoy, Al Robbins, Bill Brand, Liza Bear & Lizzie Borden. Other recipients include Susan Kouguell, Ernest Marrero & Erick Beckman.

● **AFI/SONY NATIONAL STUDENT COMPETITION** has awarded AIVF member Annie Goldson a Sony 1820 for placing first in the Central Region's Experimental Division. Congratulations!

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# INDEPENDENT

**NOTHING LIGHTS A FIRE LIKE A DREAM DEFERRED:  
Black Filmmakers in Los Angeles**



**NICARAGUA'S VIDEO REVOLUTION  
MUSIC AND THE LAW**



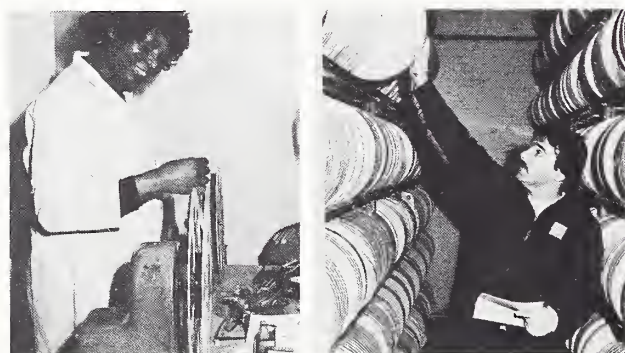
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NOVEMBER 1984  
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**Cover:** Los Angeles is Hollywood, saunas and est—and, increasingly, a city of minorities. Renee E. Tajima and Tracey Willard's article, "Nothing Lights a Fire Like a Dream Deferred," profiles the increasingly prolific and visible Black filmmaking community in Los Angeles. Photo: Charles Burnett's *My Brother's Wedding* (courtesy filmmaker).

### Correction

A few errors appeared in the article "Patronizing" in the September issue of *The Independent*. Peggy Kenas's name was spelled incorrectly; the author of the "We Don't Fund Media" handbook is David S. Shepard; and the project was conceived at the 1982 annual meeting of the National Network on Grantmakers.



## Yankee, Go Home

To the editor:

Frankly, I was highly offended by the boastful comments of the self-proclaimed "white filmmaker," Robert Mugge ["Letters," *The Independent*, September 1984], who had the temerity to brag about his putatively illegal breaking of the cultural boycott of South Africa by sending his film *Black Wax* to the land of apartheid. I am disappointed that Gil Scott-Heron apparently acquiesced in this disgrace.

Mugge goes on and on about how "independent" filmmakers should be making "independent" decisions about this critical act of cultural solidarity and pooh-poohs the principled stand of the African National Congress, the liberation movement of South Africa. This reflects racism and national chauvinism in that Mugge takes it on himself to tell the representative of the oppressed that he has a better idea of how they should conduct their just struggle. Also one has to wonder how Mugge—in that center of international communications, Springfield, Pa.—obtains the information that allows him to make political judgments contrary to those of the majority of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth nations, etc. He says, "Black South Africans and their progressive white allies are pleading for our support." That is true. But the African National Congress and the United Democratic Front (another South African opposition group with broad support) support the notion that this "support" from independents should come in the form of boycotting the apartheid regime.

How many times have we heard representatives of transnational corporations prate about how their being in South Africa actually helps the Black majority, while all the while the Black majority is saying, "Yankee, go home." Mugge finds himself in this curious company. How many artists, whose names are presently on the UN boycott list, have gone to South Africa, performed before integrated audiences, then come home raving about how this has undermined apartheid—yet the repressive machinery continues grinding unabated? When will these naive

artists realize that Pretoria will from time to time allow such integration in order to throw dust in the eyes of the unwary international community and to better preserve its repressive rule?

No, Mr. Mugge, I don't respect at all your so-called "committed" choice. In my mind, and in the mind of other anti-apartheid activists, your breaking of the boycott places you on the wrong side of history. The anti-Nazi resistance has given us important lessons about what happens when individuals decide that not isolating a pariah regime is the wisest choice. It is to be hoped that other filmmakers will not too become "cinematic scabs" by crossing the cultural picket-line surrounding the neo-Nazi Pretoria regime.

—Dr. Gerald Horne  
Sarah Lawrence College  
Bronxville, New York

To the editor:

Robert Mugge's letter on "Independents and South Africa" [September, 1984] is a classic example of the fuzzy-headed thinking that often surrounds the issues of politics and race. Mugge says that "few of us have firsthand knowledge of what really goes on in a country like South Africa" yet he concludes that our responsibility as independents "means not bowing to the demands of any organization, no matter how well-intentioned."

For Mugge's information, the African National Congress is not merely well-intentioned but has been the authentic representative of the Black people of South Africa since 1910. The campaign for the cultural boycott of South Africa was initiated by the ANC as far back as 1958 and gained ground particularly after 1976 in the wake of the Soweto uprisings where more than 1,000 people were killed by the white police for protesting racist laws. The UN has passed several resolutions calling for the total isolation of South Africa and the imposition of the cultural boycott. The apartheid regime has also been suspended from the UN General Assembly, while the ANC has been recognized as the true representative of the majority of people of South Africa and granted

observer status. Clearly, there should be no doubt as to whom one should ask when confronted with an invitation from the Durban Film Festival.

Had Mugge asked (as I did when invited to the festival), the ANC would have responded as follows: "While we appreciate the good intentions of groups like the Durban Film Festival, we suggest non-participation in such programs because there can be no normal cultural interaction in an abnormal society. . . . It is impossible for the majority our oppressed masses to become part of those so-called integrated audiences that are usually paraded in white centers as petty reforms of apartheid." The issue for independents is: if Black South Africans ask our support, then it should be given as dictated by them. After all, they are the ones struggling to free themselves. They know their situation and their needs best. Often, supporters begin discussing with other supporters what they think should be done, and they forget their role, particularly when the struggling oppressed are Black and the supporters are white. The ANC invites all support, but from within the framework of their struggle. As a self-proclaimed "white filmmaker whose last several films have dealt with Black subjects," Mugge should realize that the goal in South Africa is not integration *per se*, but rather power, and who will control South Africa—the majority or the minority?

—St. Clair Bourne  
New York City

*Editor's note: Robert Mugge's original letter stated that "few of us have firsthand knowledge of what all really goes on in a country like South Africa" [emphasis added]. The "all" was omitted from the letter as printed in the September issue for grammatical reasons, with Mugge's consent.*



# Gimme Shelter: IATSE Tax Incentives

Many independent producers think of themselves as film artists, but often the real test of creativity lies in the unpoetic job of raising the necessary hard cash. It is a task requiring the combined skills of a businessman, salesman, psychologist, and actor. Producers in search of capital would have a considerably easier time attracting investment if they could promise investors not only the intangible glamour of involvement in the movie industry but the very tangible lure of tax savings. At the Independent Feature Project Market in New York last month, a breakfast meeting was held to discuss the strategy of putting just such tax legislation on the books.

In the early 1970s the film industry, together with the oil and other industries, enjoyed these kinds of tax incentives. They were eliminated by the tax reform bill of 1976. This time the plan is to create a special bill specifically aimed at film investors. It would allow them to defer all taxes on money invested in film production until they recoup their investment. At that time they could be taxed at the full rate. Should the film in question never make money, the loss could be written off.

Two years ago the IFP Market hosted a roundtable discussion to appraise the prospects of tax incentives by deferral. According to IFP director Tim Ney, the consensus at the time was that independents lacked sufficient clout to move such legislation through Congress. This time, however, independents have allies in the entertainment unions, which are eager to boost employment for their members. Michael Proscia, president of IATSE Local 52, is a prime mover in the current drive. At a union lobbying workshop last spring, he fired the first salvo, noting, "Every country in the world has some kind of incentive for independent producers to make movies except the United States."

Ney acknowledged that framing new tax incentives will require a little finesse. "Film tax shelters were sometimes abused in the past. There were people using them to make pornography, and films were being made without the intention of ever making money. The question is how to write 'morality' into such a bill." Ney suggested that there might be a budgetary limitation in the legislation so it is "structured to non-exploitative, low-budget independents."

All parties involved in the incipient lobbying push realize the climate is less than congenial for the creation of new tax incentives, perceived by many as tax loopholes. The effort will surely be haunted by the endless string of zeroes in the current budget deficit. The drive would be strengthened by a commitment from the Hollywood studios, but their reaction is unpredictable. A bill aimed at a low-budget production would not have a direct impact on their revenues. But Ney pointed out that some studios have shown interest in buying negatives of independently produced films: "They can get cheaper films, and if it doesn't work out, they can drop them without having millions tied up." The availability of more investment capital for dependent productions would obviously provide more films to acquire.

The other big question mark is the reaction of the Reagan administration. Although the White House refuses to halt defense spending—the major drain on the budget—it is very big on symbolic gestures, such as the CPB funding veto [see Media Clip in this issue], which demonstrate "concern" over spending profligacy. However, the Great Communicator recently demonstrated he still has a soft spot for Hollywood when he took the production industry's side against his own FCC chairman during the financial interest and syndication rules fracas last spring. White House support would be crucial to the success of the IATSE effort.

The next step is putting together a national *ad hoc* committee to draft a bill and elicit bipartisan support in Congress. Despite the deficit, Proscia believes, "If the value of tax incentives to the industry obtained 26 Congressional sponsors in 1971 we will be able to get even more sponsors at a time when the tax incentive is so vital to . . . increased production in the United States." Brave words, but whether Congress buys them remains to be seen.

—Debra Goldman

## ICAP Short-Circuited

On October 15, Independent Creative Artists and Producers (ICAP) closed its doors after 10 years. Although the passing of this

"experiment" in the distribution of independent films to the cable industry is poignant, it falls short of disaster. Unlike the ill-fated Serious Business Company, which went out of business last year, ICAP leaves no debts. As the staff reassured its mediamaking members in a farewell letter, "Everyone will be paid."

ICAP began as the institutional spawn of the then-fledgling AIVE. Shortly after the Association was incorporated in 1974, a committee was formed by Charles Levine, Kitty Morgan, and Marc Weiss to investigate the potential of cable television as a market for independent work. At that time, cable was still a relatively unknown factor in the yet-to-be-hyped communications revolution; commercial satellite transmission was only a few years old, as was the pay cable pioneer, Home Box Office. The committee ventured into this unknown territory with the feeling that the sky, literally, was the limit. There was talk of a satellite service devoted to independent work—a goal which remained elusive. An elaborate project was designed, proposing a collaboration between independents and an interactive system in Columbus, Ohio—only to die for lack of funding.

The one aspect of the cable project that did click was a distribution service which would bring independents into the cable industry. The committee met with HBO, and the programming service immediately saw the benefit of working with a single source to obtain the short films needed to fill out its all-feature schedule. "HBO said to us, 'Start an organization of your own, become a real entity,'" explained Morgan, who eventually emerged as head of the organization. HBO backed its commitment with a \$500 check. Independent Cinema Artists and Producers, a not-for-profit distributor, was born.

Subsequent grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Markle Foundation, and the New York State Council on the Arts gave ICAP a more solid foundation. Other cable services were added to the client roster—Showtime, USA Network, CBS Cable—but HBO remained the primary customer. "They were our best client," Morgan said. "I feel they've gone out of their way to license as many things as possible, given the constraints imposed by the people upstairs."



Yet some critics of the organization say that while friendly relations between ICAP and HBO helped put cable dollars into filmmakers' pockets, the arrangement that evolved between the two never blossomed into clout for the independent community as a whole. "If you play HBO's game on its terms, then you are totally subject to its whims," commented a former ICAP board member. "And that's exactly what happened to ICAP."

The problems for ICAP began when the cable revolution went into retreat in the early '80s. Promising programming services were washed away in a sea of red ink. As the competition thinned out, it also grew more fierce. The surviving services sought to establish themselves as indispensable sources of home entertainment through "exclusives" and in-house interstitial programming designed to create a distinctive "look." The potpourri effect of independently produced shorts no longer did the trick.

The ubiquitous music video also took a large chunk out of ICAP's market. "I've had clients say to me, 'I'd buy more films from you, but the record companies give me these things for free, and I have a budget to think about,'" Morgan said. "Music video is destroying the market for shorts."

ICAP countered the trend by expanding its roster of clients to include public TV, commercial broadcast stations, and foreign television. Recently, its regular customers have included NBC's primetime *Blooper* show and the syndicated *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. Although such clients brought in welcome income, they were a sign of how diffuse ICAP's "mission" had become. This year NYSCA declined to renew its grant support—a blow that gave additional impetus to the decision to close ICAP before it became mired in debt.

Morgan is resolutely upbeat about ICAP's past accomplishments. "We had the most generous fee structure in the business [an average of 75% on sales went to the filmmaker]. We offered both exclusive and non-exclusive contracts. We were unique in that we kept filmmakers informed about each sale, and told them when their work would be aired." But ICAP's most important accomplishment, for Morgan, was that "we introduced independents to industry people who didn't know they existed. We created this awareness and put filmmakers in contact with new sources of work."

The truth of Morgan's assertion will be tested in the next few years. How many of ICAP's film and videomakers will find new television distributors? How many will make sales? Whatever the answer, the imperative behind ICAP's creation remains. Independents need to

organize in order to penetrate new markets no less now than in the mid-'70s. Cable may be a broken dream, but on the horizon, the "visionaries" see home video's star rising...

## A Station of Our Own

Five independent radio and television producers in Philadelphia—three of them minorities—have been awarded a license by the Federal Communications Commission to construct and operate a full-power public television station. According to program director Elizabeth Perez-Luna, Channel 35 will be among the few full-power stations in the country devoted to independently-produced, locally-originated, community-based and Third World-oriented programming, as well as offering a bilingual Spanish-English daily newscast.

The producers group, called Independence Public Media, is careful not to criticize WHYY, Philadelphia's public television station, but its program plans are clearly designed to fill the gaps in the standard PBS schedule. "We want to

get back to what we understood public television and radio to be—that is, diversity and local programming," explained Peter Cuozzo, who is currently the station manager of WXPB-Radio and a board member of IPM. "Philadelphia, for example, has a lot of very distinct neighborhoods. It's perfectly set up to showcase one to another and create a mosaic of the city."

To keep the costs down, IPM will follow the model of community-based production that was first pioneered 20 years ago in Canada. According to Cuozzo, "A few people will be hired as coordinators and facilitators to work with universities, community groups, and independents, and give professional guidance. The model works. It radically alters the way programming is produced."

The station's business manager, Wilfredo Seda, a producer with WITS in Harrisburg, Pa., estimates the station will require a relatively low \$1.25 million in start-up costs. IPM is approaching a variety of foundations and public agencies for grants. When the station goes on the air in approximately two years, Seda hopes to appeal to a "new kind of sponsor"—local

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businesses who will be attracted by the nature of the programming.

The other principals in the station are Barbara Grant, the news director of WDAS, a Black radio news and information station, and Frank Martin, video producer and finance consultant to non-profits. The group is currently focusing on planning and community outreach. "We're trying to very carefully construct our financial base, and business and community ties first," said Cuozzo. "The issue of planning is critical to us."

—Renee Tajima

## Less Butter, More Guns: Reagan Vetoes CPB Budget

They've put the corks back into the champagne bottles at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Last August, it appeared that CPB, surviving on a subsistence diet of federal funds for the past several years, could celebrate the prospect of heartier rations come fiscal 1987. Shortly before the summer recess, Congress passed S.2436, which increased CPB's spending ceiling by 49% over the 1986 authorization of \$159.5

million. The margins of victory for the legislation in both chambers were impressive: 329 to 91 in the House, and passage by voice vote in the Senate. CPB had reason to be jubilant over this show of bipartisan support for public broadcasting.

But in September, President Reagan made good on his threat to put a stop to such so-called "budget busting," and vetoed the authorization in the name of fiscal restraint. (It was the first veto of CPB funding since Richard Nixon said no in 1973.) The President told Congress that he could not justify "locking in public broadcasting funding levels that are so obviously excessive." The Administration's own ideal figure for 1987 is a flat \$100 million, which would represent a dramatic cut of 37% from 1986 levels.

The 49% increase, dubbed "too far, too fast" by vindicated opponents of the bill, appears large on its face, but simple arithmetic does not tell the whole story. As House bill sponsor Timothy Wirth (D-CO) argued during the floor debate, such an increase seems sizable only in relation to the massive reductions in public television funding Reagan instituted in his first year of office. The original authorization for 1983 was set by the Carter administration at

\$220 million. But in 1981, the White House slashed that figure almost in half. Wirth pointed out that the spending ceilings authorized by S.2436 (\$238 million in 1987, \$253 million in 1988, and \$270 million in 1989) represented "an average annual increase of only 3.47% from...1983." And Wirth's figure is not adjusted for inflation—which has run considerably higher in the production industry than in the economy as a whole.

Reagan also nixed a \$159 million authorization for the 1987-1989 Public Telecommunications Facilities Program, decrying the "unjustified expansion of the program to include repair and replacement of existing equipment." This "expansion" was the result of the deletion of a previous requirement that 75% of the fund be devoted to "new services." Reagan's indignation notwithstanding, the money is badly needed to upgrade the public television system's aging physical and technical facilities, neglected during the recent lean years.

Supporters of the bill have not given up. In a September letter to PTV supporters, Wirth urged them to voice concern to their representatives. "It is ridiculous to even suggest that Federal support for public broadcasting has anything to do with the nation's budgetary deficits," Wirth wrote, charging that the veto was a political "tactic to illustrate concern about the Federal budget." At press time, a floor vote to override the veto had been requested in the Senate. The question is whether Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), a vociferous supporter of public broadcasting, will challenge the President in an election year.

It is by no means certain that independents will benefit from a more generous share of government funds for public broadcasting. But continued austerity will almost certainly accelerate trends in PTV inimicable to greater independent participation in the system: fewer programming risks, more corporate logos, and perhaps the eventual commercialization of flagship PTV stations.

—DG■

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# Counter-Convention: The Peace Image Festival



Photo: Phyllis Gahert

Friends of the Fish try to dismantle Diablo in *A Question of Power*, shown at the Peace Image Festival.

**KATHY BREW**

The summer of 1984. . . Big Brother (or Big Sister) and "the whole world was watching" as Democratic candidates, delegates and alternates, protesters and the media swelled into San Francisco for the Democratic National Convention. Many cultural events were specifically planned to coincide with activities at the Moscone Center in an attempt to capture some of the limelight and offer alternative venues for addressing issues facing all of us—particularly during this election year. The Peace Image Festival was one of these ambitious projects where the fusion of art and politics was celebrated. Presented in conjunction with "A Vision of America at Peace," a multi-media exposition concurrent with the convention organized by a coalition of over 100 peace and

environmental groups, the festival showcased approximately 60 films and videotapes. The collection of issue-oriented works by independents included award-winning pieces, and there were six days of free public screenings, presented in cooperation with Film Arts Foundation, a Bay Area organization of independent film and videomakers.

According to festival director David Brown, the event brought together works on peace, environmental, and non-intervention issues "in a coalition against the policies of the Reagan administration." The purpose was not to balance opposing views, but to present positive images—Vision of America at Peace had mandated a ratio of 75% positive to 25% negative films/tapes. The inclusion of four films by Les Blank, *In Heaven There Is No Beer?* among others, helped provide a more upbeat focus—in Brown's words, "What we're work-

ing to protect." But, Brown admits, "More than half of the pieces included may be considered negative in terms of presenting life-threatening, global issues. The positive tone came in a search for alternatives and solutions." Dorothy Fadiman's *World Peace is a Local Issue* is one example. As Fadiman states, "Seeing statistics is one thing, but I hope a greater balance will evolve where facts are presented with models of alternatives that empower people." Brown's own work-in-progress, *A Question of Power: The Struggle Over Diablo Canyon* (one of the two world premieres at the festival) portrays the work of the Abalone Alliance—described by Brown as "a wonderful model for grassroots organizing for social change, for consensus and the power of the individual to make a difference." James Heddle's *Strategic Trust: The Making of a Nuclear-Free Palau* (a Bay Area premiere of this work, which won a blue ribbon



at the 1984 American Film Festival) belongs in the same category. According to Heddle, "I'm using communications media to portray workable future options on global issues that we're facing as a species, versus the 'Woe is us; eat, drink and be merry' style that is prevalent in negative media portrayals. The festival managed to be positive without being Pollyannaish."

Brown was amazed by the support he received from producers and distributors alike. With the exception of *Testament*, all of the works were donated to the festival. The screening of *Testament*, combined with an appearance by Carol Amen, who wrote the original story, was cited by Brown as one of the festival's highlights. Another was *Hidden Voices: The Karen Silkwood Story*, co-produced by Ruth Landy, Judy Irving, and Chris Beaver, which provoked a great response, falling on the heels of the *Silkwood* screening and thus underscoring the discrepancies between the independent and the Hollywood versions of the same event. *Women's Voices: The Gender Gap Movie*, by Jenny Rohrer, became a particularly timely work, in light of Geraldine Ferraro's candidacy.

For the issue-oriented mediamakers represented, the message was paramount. Ian Thiermann, who co-produced *The Edge of History* along with Eric Thiermann and Vivienne Verdon-Roe, emphasized this concern: "Stopping/reversing the nuclear arms race is a subject by which I am possessed. The issue is so pertinent that we're interested in exposing our materials to as many people as possible, whether or not we get paid." Jack Wilson of Fine Line Films, who co-directed *Mad River: Hard Times in Humboldt County* with Clair Schoen and Mark Freeman, reiterated this commitment: "As a cultural worker, there is a larger concern, a need to change the kind of images presented. We'd always participate in part of a larger network where people are trying to affect consciousness." The festival functioned as an exchange for independents' ideas and images. Dan Wohlfeiler, co-producer, with Maria Taylor, of *Water Wars: The Battle for Mono Lake*, found that "it was a good opportunity for work of odd lengths to be shown, since these pieces have difficulty being seen in standard broadcast formats. In fact, it's rare when video is shown in an audience situation with a chance for actual feedback."

According to Brown, the discussions between producers and audience following screenings added to the festival's success. Several local producers agreed that audiences were attentive and well-informed and discussions fruitful and stimulating. However, Bill Jersey (*In Our Defense; The First 50 Years: Reflections on*

*U.S.-Soviet Relations*) commented, "It seemed that the screenings were for the 'family'—an already interested and committed community."

The festival's original intent was to reach beyond the *cognoscenti* to delegates and a broader audience. In retrospect, the convention—with its attendant plethora of conflicting activities, including peace and other issue-oriented events and celebrations galore—detracted from the festival. Nevertheless, sizes of audiences varied widely, from as few as 10 at afternoon screenings to full houses at others. And despite some disappointment with the absence of delegates, or lack of broader outreach, the participants I spoke to felt their work had been well promoted and professionally presented to both the press and the public. Brown and associate director John Papagni were commended for an incredible logistical feat in operating the festival on their \$1,400 budget. Chris Beaver said that two post-festival screenings of his works—one at the Department of Energy in Oakland and the other at the Lawrence Livermore Lab—may have resulted from the festival. Contrary to Jersey's evaluation of the audiences, Beaver said he "got the impression that there were quite a few people who were out and about and decided to stroll by. It was almost like flypaper; people would wander by and get stuck."

Obviously, the goal of an event like the Peace Image Festival is to increase the number of people who "get stuck." Although Brown has neither time nor money to take the festival to the Republican Convention in Dallas, he hopes it will serve as a model for festivals throughout the country, particularly before the election and in more conservative communities. There is already some interest from Eugene, Oregon for an abbreviated version, and Brown points out that the key is to "localize" programming, to provoke discussion in each particular community. To assist such efforts Brown will share his resources with anyone interested. To obtain a program listing of the Peace Image Festival, along with a list of addresses/distributors and publicity from the San Francisco Festival, write to Brown at 2114 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco, CA 94118; enclose \$4.00 to cover duplication and postage. The expansive goal for the project is encapsulated in the festival program: "We are celebrating the power of film and video to inform, to inspire, to persuade and to motivate into action." ■

*Kathy Brew works at San Francisco's public television station, KQED, and writes freelance articles on media and the arts. She is currently working on an independent documentary.*

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# An Independent Primer for the University Film and Video Association

BETSY A. McLANE

Who pays—and who should pay—to keep independently produced work before the public was a main topic at the 38th Annual Conference of the University Film and Video Association, entitled “Producing Films and Video: Institutions and Independence,” held July 27 through August 4 at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Over 200 film and video-makers, scholars, teachers, distributors, exhibitors, government officials, funding agency representatives, students and others concerned with co-existence between independents and the larger institutions of moving image media attended the conference, which addressed a full range of independent possibilities from the local cable access programs like New York’s “Paper Tiger Television” to such Hollywood-financed youth market features as Randal Kleiser’s *Grandview USA*.

During the week-long meeting, every possibility between these polarities was debated in formal sessions and off-the-record discussions. This open environment produced a provocative mix of facts, fictions, and opinion. Program chairs Professors Jeanne Allen and Paul Swan of Temple University managed to include almost every point of view in the disparate independent world. No definitive conclusions or solutions were sought; instead, the conference provided a lively forum in which to clarify the many questions facing independents today. Wanda Bershen, former director of the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers, described the current state of the independent community as unstable, caught in a tenuous moment in time. She made the analogy that independents are painting a portrait of a difficult situation without guides, and without even knowing if the paint will wash off tomorrow.

An opening afternoon session on “Independent Producers: Who and What Are They?” paired filmmaker Robert Richter, chair of AIVF, with film programmer Linda Blackaby, director of the Neighborhood Film Project in Philadelphia. Richter described the independent community in terms of its often adversarial relationship to institutions such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He claimed that fund-

ing and distribution agencies “take away the tools of independence” by attempting to control content and form in series such as *Frontline*. Richter advocated intensive lobbying to gain access to government monies, specifically the \$5 million of the CPB program fund earmarked for independents. His implied definition of independents included those who voice opinions or use filmmaking techniques that are often at odds with the interests of major mass media institutions like PBS. Linda Blackaby provided a historical and schematic framework, identifying four “gates” through which film and video must move: 1) funding, 2) production, 3) distribution/exhibition/criticism, and 4) preservation.

Bershen’s portrait of an unsettled moment in time and Blackaby’s four “gates” proved to be useful guideposts for much of the conference. In a panel on “New Formats,” videodisc and videotext were portrayed as still lurking in the background of the independent’s portrait, waiting for funding, production, and distribution to catch up with technology. In a session on “Corporate Film and Video,” the independent was categorized as a freelancer possessing an array of skills and technological tools that could be purchased on a per-job basis. Similarly, rock video came under analysis as independent work. Like corporate moving image media, the funding, production, and distribution areas of music videos are self-evident and sales-oriented. Joan Lynch of Villanova University pointed out that the aesthetic legacy of experimental, avant-garde, and surrealist film/video artists has become the mass-consumed commercial property of the video pop music industry.

Criticism was a major part of panel presentations on “Experimental Film and Video,” “Television Criticism,” and “Feminist Film and Video.” The latter focused on the ways in which various groups of women have operated both within and outside traditional institutions to make films with specifically female orientations; specifically discussed were early films of the women’s suffrage movement and feminist filmmaking in West Germany. Lilly Ann Boroszowski of Southern Illinois University identified the National Film Board of Canada’s women’s

studio, “Studio D,” as a model for recognizing and supporting women’s voices within a strictly codified funding/production/ distribution/ preservation institution. Studio D, responsible for such recent works as *Not a Love Story* and *If You Love This Planet*, represents one national government’s recognition of the need to provide access to traditionally media-disenfranchised groups. Even with the recent restructuring of the National Film Board’s mandate, the position of Studio D seems to be secure, ensuring that Canadian filmmakers and audiences will have an official venue for women’s filmmaking.

A panel on “Funding Independent Film and Video” provided nuts and bolts advice for U.S. independent filmmakers, who no longer enjoy the freedom of relatively unrestricted grants and support that seemed to characterize the 1970s. Andrea Lawler of the Astrea Foundation suggested that thorough homework is necessary for filmmakers to determine the actual goals of any private foundation. Gary Edgerton of Bowling Green State University supplied a history of the growth of state film bureaus, pointing out that independent features can often obtain support and services from states anxious to attract film production to their area. But with many states now actively seeking to attract “runaway” Hollywood productions, and with many mainstream feature producers responding, state film bureaus may become less enthusiastic about extending special treatment to small independent operations. The door is still open, however, and regional filmmakers can obtain much information regarding locations, support services, local statutes, etc. by contacting state film bureaus early in the planning process. Robert Gershon of Castleton State College outlined various state humanities council approaches to production funding, and emphasized the need to keep a “humanities” point of view at the forefront when approaching state councils. (Humanities councils tend to feel that arts councils should handle films and video from creative-aesthetic points of view, and so they rely heavily on content and recognized subject experts in awarding monies.) The National Endowment for the Arts’ representative, Perrin Ireland, emphasized the need to get to know panelists personally through telephone calls and visits, as well as let-



ters. Other fundraising strategies ranged from Frank Mouris' (*Frank Film*), who stressed the need to network among possible private funder/investors and to present a professional attitude, including dressing the part of a successful businessperson, to that of California Newsreel's Larry Daressa, who presented a forceful case for continuing to press CPB for funds for potentially controversial projects.

Money questions became a more heated topic when the discussion moved from seeking underwriting for production to the distribution of independent work. An evening session of "National Distribution of Independent Film and Video" posed the most direct confrontation between those who think that it is critical for independent work to reach the widest audience through almost any available means, and those who demand that independents receive fair compensation for their work. Robert Shuman of The Learning Channel, a cable operation reaching 400,000 homes per month, claimed that the channel offers independent producers the chance to get their work out to an American cable audience through series such as its Independents Program of 12 one-hour "Dispatches" funded by the NEA and the MacArthur Foundation. Shuman was challenged by Mitchell Block of Direct Cinema Limited, who argued that cable and pay TV services offer independents a very poor deal in terms of payment. Not only is the up-front money offered by TV less than acceptable, but, according to Block, filmmakers risk losing potential revenues from the non-theatrical 16mm and video markets when their work is broad or narrowcast. With copyright and fair use laws continuously challenged or ignored, many users choose to tape from television rather than pay for rentals or sales. Speaking from the audience, Sheldon Sachs, longtime non-theatrical distributor (Coronet-Perspective-Centron) echoed Block's words, and commented that revenues from a particular film or video dropped dramatically once it received television exposure. Brian Donegan of Devillier-Donegan Enterprises, which sells international TV rights for independents, argued that each film has to be handled on a case-by-case basis: if a filmmaker believes that a title has a strong enough non-theatrical market, television can wait, but many times a filmmaker is forced to take short-term advances from television as an economic necessity.

The best possible distribution, exhibition, and ultimately preservation situations have been, and will continue to be, those which build audiences for the many varieties of independent

film and video. Commercial cable has failed in this, and has thus far produced an audience tuned in chiefly to Hollywood-style movies, sports, and MTV. It remains for specialized distribution and exhibition channels, often working on regional levels, to create grass-roots demand for independent product. Among those who have been markedly successful in this are regional media arts centers and local cable community access programmers, along with independents producing regional work. The conference examined these essential contributions in panels on "Independents in Cable," "Regional Film and Video," and "Regional Film Production: Collectives and Others." The last included Dee Davis' down-home explanation of Appalshop Film Collective as a multi-media organization dedicated to both debunking stereotypes about Appalachia and providing access for the community. Appalshop screened its film, *Strangers and Kin*, and Film in the Cities' Rick Weise showed *Harold of Orange*. Film in the Cities' multiple goals of funding, production, and exhibition for the Minneapolis/St. Paul region were echoed by Chicago-area Kartemquin Films' Gordon Quinn. Kartemquin screened its latest work, *The Gender Gap*, a madcap mix of live action and animation designed to show women voters how they can and should defeat Ronald Reagan in 1984. The advantages and difficulties of being a regional producer attempting first-time national self-distribution were outlined by Ohio-based Aaron Ezekial, associate producer of *Seeing Red*. And Amalie Rothchild demonstrated durability by describing how New Day Films has survived as one of America's oldest collectives providing regional independents with a national distribution mechanism.

Distribution was taken outside national boundaries in the panel on "International Distribution of Independent Production." According to Brian Donegan, the world market is not as wide as one might hope, as the U.S. market represents about one-half of the broadcast world; the other major markets are Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, France, Australia, Italy and Canada. Donegan said that an extraordinary documentary might gross \$120,000 to \$150,000, but it is rare that the average independent film will reach \$100,000 in broadcasting revenues. The same panel offered explanations of the workings of the Independent Feature Project from its beginning in 1979 to this year's sixth annual market, designed to attract many foreign buyers for American independents. And the sometimes-obscure United States Information Agency was represented by John Mendenhall. He said the USIA purchases about 300 documentaries per year with the stated purpose of ad-

vancing United States "diplomatic efforts."

As Jeanne Allen pointed out, it sometimes seems that even regionally made films run the risk of taking on Hollywood's "McDonald's" approach to mass communications culture. But the conference did show that concerted personal and group efforts make a difference in the kinds and quality of independent film and video produced. Among the many works screened were *Echo Park*, *The Gender Gap*, *The Passaic Textile Strike* (preserved by MOMA), *Flamenco at 5:15* (the National Film Board of Canada), *New Voices* (from the Public Interest Video Network) and the Whitney Biennial Video Exhibition. Made with vastly different resources and points of view, each exemplifies the drive necessary for every independent: the dedication of personal vision to overcome the obstacles of funding, production, distribution/exhibition and preservation on the outside of America's corporate media. ■

Betsy A. McLane works with the Los Angeles distribution company Direct Cinema Limited, and holds a Ph.D. in cinema from the University of Southern California.

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# Notes on Nicaraguan Video

## LIBRE O MORIR

DEEDEE HALLECK

Any public event in Nicaragua that draws more than 30 people will also attract a video crew. Not the U.S. network crews who limit their coverage to interviews with irate *La Prensa* editors and impatient consumers in food lines. Not the European crews who work the solidarity brigades from both East and West Germany. Not the independent U.S. and Canadian crews who line up *en masse* for Mary Hartman's (the nun, not the soap opera dip) tour of La Granja, the model prison farm, or wait for a visit with Ernesto Cardenal at the headquarters of the Ministry of Culture. No. The *public* events—concerts, neighborhood meetings, election rallies, funerals of martyrs, marches of mothers, openings of hospitals, hospital bombings, school openings (and, likewise, attacks on schools), school graduations, theater festivals, ceremonies for land title distribution to *campesinos*, *Cara al Pueblo* [Face the People] meetings—are all documented by Nicaraguan video crews. This work constitutes what is the only authentic video revolution in the world today.

Before the Revolution, Nicaraguan television productions consisted of Anastasio Somoza's speeches and military reviews. A small film company made commercials for businesses, many owned by the Somoza family. There were no training opportunities in either film or television. Equipment was outmoded and cumbersome; portable video was not available. In the past five years, in the face of severe economic constraints and with a war on its northern and southern borders, Nicaragua has built a media infrastructure based in portable video. Not video to sell commodities—this is community video, the kind that has been used in recent social struggles in the U.S. Here, though, these movements have often been marginal, as has the video associated with them—seen at occasional organizing meetings, on public access cable, and late at



night on public television. In Nicaragua, video is part of a social dynamic that is transforming the country. Video is not just documenting that process; it is central to the process.

In November 1983 and August 1984, I visited Nicaragua. My first realization about Nicaraguan media, and the Nicaraguan Revolution, was that there is no monolithic party line. Like any society, Nicaragua is diverse—within the Revolution, a broad coalition of groups manifesting various beliefs and styles. This variety is reflected in their media centers; there is a different feeling in their work spaces and in the tapes they make.

A member of Cinemovil, a division of Incine, sets up 35mm projection in the countryside in Nicaragua.

The network logo of Sistema Sandinista, the national television system of Nicaragua.



# Media:



Photo: Adriana Angel



The largest and best equipped of the five main production centers in Nicaragua is the Sistema Sandinista [SSTV], the national television system. The Sistema is allocated two broadcast channels, one of which operates from noon until midnight and the other after 4 p.m. Their programming, like much of what I encountered in Nicaragua, is an amazing assortment of contradictions, from saccharine Mexican and Colombian *novelas* to the dubbed version of *Barnaby Jones*. They broadcast ads for McDonald's (yes, Managua has one), Coca-Cola, and Soviet tractors. In November 1983, the station logo showed a group of tiny animated doves flapping around a globe to form the letters FSLN, as a voiceover and vertical crawl proclaimed "TODAS LAS ARMAS AL PUEBLO" [All Arms to the People].

Despite its revolutionary station breaks, Sistema productions often rework U.S. network formats. Everywhere, television has been dominated by U.S. models, so that "professionalism" has become defined as the NBC look. Unlike Soviet film in the 1920s, which forged new paths and was able to leap over the cinematic conventions of the time, Nicaraguan TV comes into a 40-year-old TV world where the national television systems of 180 different countries look as though they all come from the fortieth floor of Rockefeller Center.

The most unusual item on the Sistema's evening schedule is apt to be the news—partly because what happens in Nicaragua is unusual and interesting, but also because the form is likely to be more spontaneous than most of the Sistema's other offerings. This style, I think, results more from lack of enough tightly edited material than from any theoretical decisions by the management. Events are shot hand-held, but this doesn't mean the camera work is shaky. Most of the cameraman (the camera operators I saw were all men) are rock steady and have no need for tripods. The news stories are often visual essays—not many interviews and no on-the-scene reporters. Information is supplied by newscasters' voiceovers, but long pieces of visual material often run without commentary in a style similar to leisurely and flowing U.S. public access cable programs, where time is free and information isn't sandwiched between commercials.

One news program showed 15 minutes of drunken reveling at the Santo Domingo Festival, one of the numerous church festivals always covered by the Sistema. This is a country where the institutional church directly opposes government policies but where three priests hold cabinet-level positions. Therefore, all church activities are news—from the Purissima Festival to the bitter pronouncements of anti-Sandinista

Archbishop Obando Bravo. Participants in the continual church debates are interviewed endlessly in TV studios, and on most nights the church takes up at least one-third of the news.

Studio-produced segments of the news often seem awkward, replete with transitional errors and wobbly chroma-key edges. Occasional goofs and missed cues have made the Sistema's administration reluctant to distribute their news programs abroad. X-Change TV, a U.S. cultural exchange group, has repeatedly tried to obtain samples of Nicaraguan news for distribution, but Sistema executives prefer to lend their "professional" work, such as slick entertainment specials of the "Live from Lincoln Center" genre—a far cry from the "live from the Revolution" programs that X-Change has in mind. The open informality may charm northern visitors, the transitional mistakes may denote self-referential consciousness to a *Screen* subscriber, but they only give ulcers to the Sistema's producers.

X-Change's attraction to the primitive-looking news programs exemplifies solidarity activities that have sharpened current debates within the Ministry of Culture and among artists in Nicaragua. As a result of the Revolution, naive writing and primitive painting proliferated. Most people never had access to art materials before, and most were illiterate. Thus, an explosion of creativity has occurred during the past five years among the *campesinos*, and this type of art is always popular with solidarity groups. For example, a German art gallery sponsored large editions of primitive poster art, reproduced on expensive paper using elaborate graphic techniques. Likewise, editions of *campesino* poetry have been printed, bound, and widely distributed by internationalists. At the same time, revolutionary tourists' attractions to primitive images neglects the work of Nicaraguans with long careers in the arts who think there should be support for serious artists developing a more complex and probing aesthetic. In a country where every piece of paper and every pencil is a precious resource, the Ministry of Culture must carefully weigh every *cordoba* spent on art. Their policy has been to encourage popular, broadly diffused art activities, even if the university-trained, Managua-based, and mostly middle-class art community complains.

While this debate continues, an important role of the Sistema has been making national performances by both professional theater and dance groups and the *folklorico* available to a wide audience. Their most ambitious presentation to date, *Sandino: Santo y Sena* [Sandino: Saint and Symbol], a dance and music spectacular performance, was recorded live in Managua's opera house. The crumbling shell of a building



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has an eerie presence—a poignant reminder that this is not a typical theater, but a setting for art built on the destruction of entrenched traditions. I attended a performance there in August, and the vigor and enthusiasm of the production and the virtuosity of the lighting, dance, and 100-piece string orchestra was in stark contrast to the extreme poverty of most of the audience and the decay of the surroundings. I was very aware of watching a performance with an audience who had only very recently begun to understand what the word “theater” means. To invoke the experience, imagine that an earthquake has destroyed the Plaza Hotel and you are sitting in the ruins watching New York’s Ballet Hispanico with 3,000 poor workers. Of course, there are a few differences: as a result of the Revolution, the theater is *their* theater. Their empowerment contributes to the event, and can also be seen in the TV recording. Audience cutaways are different—these remind the audience whose show it is, anyway. But come to think of it, maybe the Lincoln Center cutaways serve the same purpose.

The Offices of Comunicaciones Midinra, a branch of the Agrarian Reform Ministry, are located on the outskirts of Managua in what was a well-to-do *hacienda*. When I was last there, the interior patio was being used as storage for empty VCR boxes. Below the patio arches a remarkable collection of desks and files—from Danish Modern to Ramada Inn Inquisition-style—are stenciled with huge numbers, like subway graffiti tags, in bright red and white paint. The numbers designate from which farm the furniture was confiscated. Many of the large farms in Nicaragua were abandoned after the Revolution, and the confiscated property from these *ranchos* gives Midinra a material edge over the other video groups. They may have desks and files, but the office desperately needs telephones. Over 70 people work at Midinra, and their single telephone is typical of the frustrating bottlenecks through which any work in contemporary Nicaragua must eventually pass.

Midinra produces more than video; they also have several printing presses, since their overall assignment is to document and explain the

agrarian reform process to the peasants and farm workers in the countryside, then to the city dwellers in Managua, Leon, Granada, and the residents of other countries. (Several of their publications are in English.) In addition to video and printing, Comunicaciones Midinra also has an audio-visual department which has produced over a dozen synchronized slide/tape shows, such as *The Benefits of Soy Beans* and *Nutrition for Pregnant Women*. Soon, Midinra plans to construct an audio studio and will program a regular radio series. The entire operation is directed by Arturo Zamora, a self-effacing man who has no desk or office but continually moves among work spaces.

Midinra’s video department occupies four rooms—an editing room, a tape library, an equipment room, and an office—with only one air conditioner. In Nicaragua, equipment and tapes are treated with great respect; editing and storage spaces are kept cool while the office steams. This is not Third World awe of high technology, but a concrete understanding of the hassles of parts replacement and tape purchase.



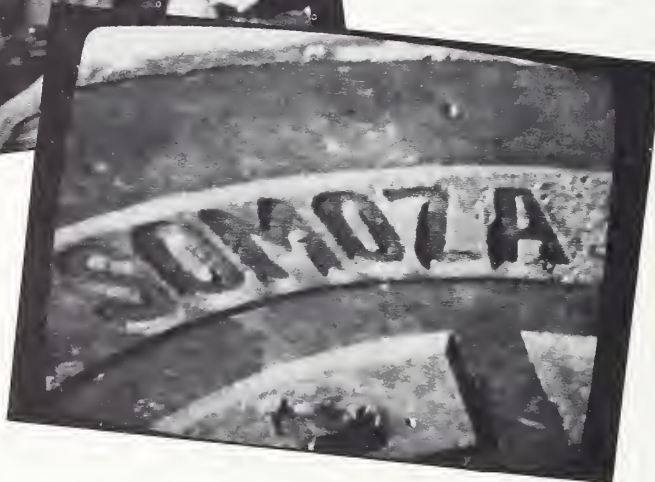
Photo: Helen Orenstein

*What's Up With Toilet Paper?*, the point-counterpoint tape about toilet paper shortages in Nicaragua is part for the X-Change TV cable series.

*Sandino Vive*, produced by Comunicaciones Midinra, commemorates the 50th anniversary of Sandino's death.



The Taller's *Así Avanzamos* [So We Advance] documents a cattle collective's fight to raise production despite contra-inflicted losses.





Augusto Tablada, who oversees this department, likes to tell how he was caught in monsoon-type rains in an open field with their new Sony M-3 camera and a 4800 VCR deck. He took off his rain gear and used it as additional protection over the already plastic-encased equipment. He spent seven hours trying to keep the equipment out of the mud. "The camera costs dollars," he grins. "I'm only worth *cordobas*." Exchange dollars are rare—*cordobas* won't buy equipment—and all of the video groups in Nicaragua rely on donated equipment.

Midinra has both  $\frac{3}{4}$ " and Beta formats. Most of their work is shot and edited on  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", then transferred to Beta for distribution in the countryside. Each regional headquarters has a Beta player and regularly shows Midinra tapes. They also show work by U.S. independents and even a few Hollywood films. The week I was there, *Julia* was going to the mountains.

Another employee, Miriam Loaisita, comes to work at Midinra carrying a shopping bag full of powdered milk boxes—each with a picture of a smiling, blonde, blue-eyed toddler: the lettering is Cyrillic, the milk is Russian. Nicaraguans prefer U.S. products, but these are harder and harder to get. Like many Nicaraguan extended families, Miriam's mother assists with caring for her four-month-old baby and three-year-old girl, but, even so, working as a video editor is difficult with two young children. Miriam must get up at 5 a.m. to go to the market to buy the week's supply of powdered milk.

Miriam started out working in film at Incine, a division of the Ministry of Culture. Because the pay was better at Midinra—6,000 *cordobas* per month compared with 3,700 at Incine—she changed jobs. She runs the editing machines but also makes content decisions. From what I could see of the postproduction process, tapes at Midinra evolve organically (to use an agricultural metaphor) from the material collected. The camera person works closely with the editor, and other employees often contribute ideas. The atmosphere at Midinra is collective, not hierarchical; occasionally agricultural advisors assist in editing, like the cattle geneticist I saw working on a tape on cattle reproduction.

Midinra's work focuses primarily on agricultural topics, but like Jaime Wheelock, the director of the Agrarian Reform Ministry, their interests extend to theoretical and historical issues. They recently completed a tape commemorating the 50-year anniversary of Sandino's death, *Sandino Vive* [Sandino Lives], which combines archival footage, recent war footage, and rural images. Of all the tapes I have seen from Nicaragua, this takes the most risks. It is passionate and experimental, using Eisensteinian

montage devices to evoke emotions: e.g., a shot of U.S. paratroopers landing in Honduras is followed by a close-up of a bull being castrated. The same anniversary was also the subject of a series produced by the Sistema, consisting of hour-long programs in which each of the *com-mandantes* answered questions posed by SSTV producers. In contrast, Midinra took Wheelock to the countryside, where he discussed the same questions with the *campesinos*. This was edited into a one-hour program, and Midinra asked the Sistema to run it instead of the stuffy studio interview. The television system refused, saying it didn't fit into their series. The relationship between Midinra and the Sistema is difficult for outsiders to comprehend. Midinra has to buy time on the Sistema for their monthly show—60,000 *cordobas* per hour—and their programs are subject to rejection by the Sistema's management. This might sound familiar to independent producers who deal with U.S. public TV.

Midinra's open atmosphere and friendly workers have made it a haven for independent producers from the U.S., who often stop by to align their cameras, splice light cables, or just hang out and screen tapes. In a sense, Midinra video grew out of the independent movement in the U.S. Prior to 1979, Augusto Tablada lived in the U.S. and worked with Eddie Becker, an independent producer in Washington, D.C. After the Revolution, Eddie came to Midinra to teach video skills to agricultural workers, and students from his class are still mainstays at Midinra. Eddie found that they learned camera techniques quite easily; he spent most of his time teaching how to solder. The cables they produced are still being used, and the trouble-shooting manual he designed for them serves as the Dr. Spock of their equipment room.

Most international media people find their way sooner or later to Midinra's workshop. Before they leave, they are given a list of missing parts and equipment to send back. Video people from both Germanies have actively supported Midinra, and a major effort is now underway to produce a series with West German TV. The show, a docudrama on farm life, will be co-produced by Miriam and a German producer.

Midinra would like to develop more such co-productions. They have been aghast at the enormous sums of money that North Americans and European producers spend in Nicaragua. Arturo Zamora suggests, "Why not use our equipment and work with us? That way we can all benefit." He recently assisted Bianca Jagger on a documentary about ecology in Nicaragua for distribution in the U.S. As with their printed materials, Midinra sees their audience as inter-

national: "We want to do our part to counter the disinformation that the world hears about Nicaragua," Arturo explains. He has embarked on a series called *Alternative Views* (not to be confused with the Texas access show of the same name) to counter Western press bias, which, he thinks, could also be a co-production.

Midinra's future plans include a feature film on the history of Sandino. Tape librarian Wilfredo Ortega Mercado is planning a program on the cultural seduction of young *campesinos* by North American consumer goods. Miriam hopes to produce a program on women agricultural workers. And the documentation of land reform continues: construction of cooperative dairies, research into ecological methods of pest control, and health care in rural areas.

Midinra also serves as liaison between producers and consumers. Their two tapes that have been most popular in the U.S. as part of X-Change TV's series deal with very provincial topics: *¿Que Pasa Con el Papel Hygienica?* and *¿Que Pasa con las Papas?* The first, *What's Up with the Toilet Paper?*, is a point-counterpoint tape about toilet paper shortages. In humorous and catchy interviews, people on the street express their various feelings about the scarcity of toilet paper, which has become one of the major complaints by those most opposed to the Revolution. By repeating these complaints and disseminating them, Midinra has been criticized for its negative attitude, but the criticism only increased the tape's popularity, and it has become an important element in discussions about shortages, hoarding, and rationing. The second tape is about potatoes. Potatoes grow well in Nicaragua, but poor farming methods have slowed production. The tape praises potatoes and includes instructions for successful growing methods.

Taller Popular de Video Timoteo Velasquez, named for a fallen comrade, is part of the Central Sandinista de Trabajadores (CST), the largest union in Nicaragua, and the Asociación de Trabajadores de Campo (ACT). Like Midinra, they have a regular series on the Sistema and also distribute Betamax tapes to union locals throughout the country. The Taller shares space with Tercer Cine, a private production company composed of internationalists Jackie Reiter, Wolf Tirado, and Jan Kees de Rooy. The Taller was founded by Bolivian film critic Alfonso Gunucio Dagron in 1981 as a Super-8 workshop under the auspices of the United Nations. Later that year, *Jump Cut* editor Julia Lesage traveled to Nicaragua to teach filmmaking at the Taller: "We worked mostly on editing techniques and alternatives to sync sound interviews, such as the use of music or other taped



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verbal material and background sound. At the suggestion of Amina Luna, one of the CST filmmakers, we began filming a project on working women's participation in the Revolution, which the group has since completed in video" [quoted from Julia Lesage and Carol Isaacs, *Voices from Nicaragua*, Vol. 1, Nos. 2 & 3].

Super-8 work became extremely difficult when Kodak refused to supply Nicaragua, and the workshop now works almost entirely in video. Amina is still one of the producers, along with Francisco Sanchez, Oscar Ortiz, Ileana Streber, Miriam Carrero, Roberto Alvarez, and Sergio Gonzales. Their productions center on people: close-ups of faces alternating with shots of their homes, their land, their work. *As Avanzamos* [So We Advance] shows the determination of cattle collective in the face of the *contra* war. This is not, however, the romantic view of "primitive" life we sometimes find in the work of *gringo* anthropologist/filmmakers. These tapes of the people emanate hope reinforced by the real accomplishments they have gained in the face of incredible odds. The ease with which the peasants collaborate with the video producers lends an intimacy to the interviews; the relationship with the camera evidenced in these tapes produces video that communicates authentic human relationships. Occasionally, this intimacy can make the Taller tapes deeply tragic. In *La Mujer*, two women who worked in the reconstruction in the north describe some of the hardships they have encountered. But they go on to list the accomplishments of the literacy campaign and agrarian reform in the face of fear and intimidation imposed by the *contras*. The bravery of these two women included their willingness to talk with the video crew; shortly after the tape appeared on television, they were both brutally murdered. One was tortured and raped along with her six children. This type of *contra* terror is not unusual, since the targets are those who work with the Revolution. The *contras* rarely attack the army, instead killing and kidnapping school teachers, doctors, nurses, and agrarian reform workers—and, on occasion, peasants who share their hope and dedication with a video crew.

Incine, the film production unit of the Ministry of Culture, was born under fire in the mountains before the Revolution. I talked with Noel Rivera, one of the *muchachos* who sustained the army of insurrection. He was only 15 years old when he left home to fight against Somoza's National Guard. There was a film crew in his battalion, and they needed someone to run the Nagra. He became a soundman after a few days' training and has worked with Incine ever since.

Incine has produced one feature film, *Alcino and the Condor*—a co-production with Costa Rica, Mexico, and Cuba—as well as numerous documentaries. Their newsreels are often screened before feature films in Nicaraguan theaters. Half of the theaters in Managua are privately owned, so Incine must pay for newsreel projection. But, theater owners refuse to play shorts that are longer than 10 minutes. Noel remembers seeing a strange, abrupt ending to a newsreel he helped make: the theater owner had simply lopped off the last two minutes of the documentary in mid-sentence.

Movie theaters in Managua show the same trashy films we find in Times Square. Kung Fu movies are the most popular: audiences line up at 7:30 to see a 9:30 show on Saturday mornings. The state-owned Cinemateca shows a few Eastern European films (Czech, Hungarian), and occasionally an independent feature from the U.S. Cuban films draw large crowds.

Incine's video department is directed by Rosanna Lacayo. Because her brothers are the main producers at Incine, some have accused the organization of being a family affair. Their most recent tape is an homage to Julio Cortazar, Argentine poet and friend to the Nicaraguan Revolution. Within the cultural debate mentioned earlier, Incine stands squarely within the "serious art" contingent. Their main interest lies in producing film versions of Latin American novels.

Incine has been on the receiving end of lavish gifts of production equipment and assistance from all over the world. The immediate success of ICAIC, the Cuban film production institute, led many to hope that Nicaragua's film production would accomplish similar feats, but several factors have prevented this from happening—most importantly, the strain and pressures of counterrevolution. Second, except for the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the U.S. economic blockade, Cuba has not shared Nicaragua's plight; in economic terms, the gap between Nicaragua and Cuba is proportionally equal to that between Cuba and the U.S. Third, prices for film and processing in Mexican labs rise daily. The fourth reason is particular to Incine: their organization seems the most chaotic of the media groups that I visited. While I was there, a group of technicians from Los Angeles leading technical workshops arrived with a substantial donation of lights and equipment. They were surprised by the lack of the most basic tools and couldn't use most of their lights: Incine has only one circuit capable of running *one* light in the workshop building. Perhaps these U.S. workshops, funded by the Common Sense Foundation, could have been planned with more common sense and have been more modest and utilitarian. But,

quien sabe? Maybe some nascent cinematographer was inspired by the classes and will emerge as a leader of the budding Nicaraguan film industry. In the meantime, Incine's video production unit is becoming more and more important as a center of activity.

The fifth video production unit in Nicaragua, the audio-visual department of the Department of the Interior, produces broadcast versions of the weekly *Cara al Pueblo* meetings, as well as instructional documentation and tapes for the Ministry of the Interior. The *Cara al Pueblo* meetings between *commandantes*, people in the Managua barrios, and peasants in the countryside are perhaps the most characteristic public events of the revolution—like Fidel's speeches in Cuba. But *Cara al Pueblo* takes the form of dialogues, not the voice of single leader: people direct questions to local and national leaders on topics ranging from new sewer lines to the relationship between church and state. When meetings are in Managua, they are broadcast live from a mobile van. The programs are very popular and would have high ratings if the Sistema bothered to count. One person I talked to complained that these meetings are orchestrated by the local CDS's (neighborhood committees for the defense of the Revolution), and that only acceptable questions are allowed, but the shows I saw were spontaneous and often very critical. The *Cara al Pueblo* meetings will become increasingly important as economic conditions worsen, because they act not as a safety valve, but as an effective way for people to participate in government. The degree to which these meetings express the authentic fears, angers, and hopes of people will be an important measure of public accountability—and the participation of video is crucial.

The *Cara al Pueblo*'s well-equipped video van is the envy of other video producers of Managua. Despite the collaborative attitude at the highest level of government, there is a great deal of competition and possessiveness between departments, exacerbated by very little communication. Incine has no idea of what Midinra is doing. Midinra has no way to plan their schedule on the Sistema, because they are not privy to the Sistema's long-range planning, nor do they know when their work will be broadcast during a particular month. The Taller has no contact with Incine. They have only one 4800 portable recording deck. If that is being repaired, they have to cancel all their shoots—even though there are at least six other decks that could be loaned from other workshops. There is only one engineer, who works at the Sistema, and he has



Early morning at a local theater in Managua.

Photo: DeeDee Halleck



put his job on the line by sometimes sneaking a workshop deck into his shop. There *are* some healthy aspects to the independence of the various groups—there is no uniform look to Nicaragua video—but all the groups would clearly benefit from sharing resources.

It is sobering for us to contemplate the future of Nicaraguan video. Even if the vicious *contra* war stops (that is, if the U.S. stopped funding it), the economic situation will still be precarious and conditions will probably worsen in the short run. As the dollar pinch becomes tighter, struggles within the trade unions will increase. Even though the prices of staples are fixed, rampant inflation seriously affects most workers. Midinra, Incine, the Sistema, and the *Cara al Pueblo* are all government sponsored. They are the “voice of the people” only insofar as the government remains true to the ideals and aspirations of the Revolution. As a voice of the workers, Taller Popular de Video may play an increasingly important role in articulating *their* needs and dissatisfactions. The real work of the Revolution remains in the future, and video can play a constructive role to the extent that it retains authenticity and pluralism.

The U.S. independent community has provided important resources for Nicaraguan video: technical assistance, equipment dona-

tions, and program exchanges. But perhaps most important has been the inspiration of community video. The personal human community work that has characterized marginalized independent video in the U.S. has become the standard for the video community of Nicaragua, whose cameras are the eyes of their nation, and whose nation stands at the heart of current human history. ■

*My son, Ezra Halleck, who lives and works in Managua as video liaison for X-Change TV, provided some of the information included in this article.*

*DeeDee Halleck, a past president of AIVF, is working on a feature film on Central America in the early twentieth century.* ©DeeDee Halleck 1984

Nicaraguan video workshops depend on donations from individuals and groups. The following are some of the items on their wish lists. X-Change TV is distributing Nicaraguan video and collecting donations for equipment and supplies for the workshops.

**Taller needs:**

a 4800 portable recording deck  
BP 60 batteries  
Cine 60 battery belts  
a character generator

**Midinra needs:**

a good turntable  
audio cables  
an audio mixer  
a time-base corrector  
video batteries, especially for their JVC field monitor

**Incine needs:**

a good 35mm camera; the one they have is on its last legs

**All the workshops need:**

new or used ¾" or Beta tapes  
programs by U.S. producers for circulation to regions. The Sistema would also like programs, especially those showing solidarity work here or abroad. They occasionally offer translation in exchange for rights.

**X-Change TV needs:**

blank ¾" tapes

To make a donation, contact: X-Change TV, Box 238 Prince St. Station, New York NY 10012. Anyone interested in screenings or public access cable distribution of Nicaraguan video should also contact X-Change TV.

—DH



RENEE E. TAJIMA and  
TRACEY WILLARD

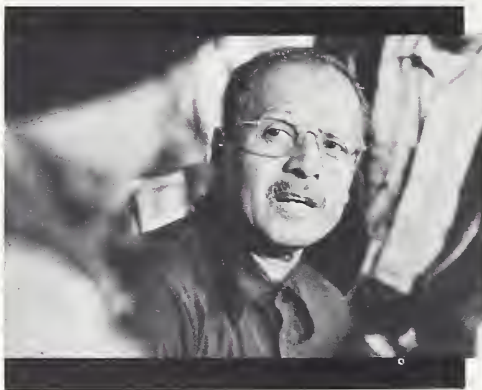
Last August, the *Los Angeles Times*' first-string film critic, Charles Champlin, devoted his column to the subject "A Black Film Bonanza Hollywood Ignored." He—and the Los Angeles filmgoing audience—were discovering for the first time the wealth of Black cinema that has been produced in recent years.

Beneath the facade of Hollywood's glitter and Southern California's "me" culture, Los Angeles is becoming a city of color. The largest ethnic group in its public schools is Latino, and it has one of the largest Asian populations in the country. It is a city with a long history of organizing for affirmative action in the workplace and schools. Los Angeles has been the source of some of the most pioneering and important independent works in recent years, much of which has been produced in these Third World communities.

The event which inspired Champlin's article was the First Annual African and Black American Film Festival at the Fox International Theater, which was held over for two extra weeks because of the unexpected audience response. The festival was something of a milestone for Los Angeles' Black independents. Billy Woodberry's *Bless Their Little Hearts* and Charles Burnett's *My Brother's Wedding*, which have both been making successful rounds of international festivals, had their homecoming and United States theatrical premieres there. Also on the bill was *Ashes and Embers* by Washington, DC-based Haile Gerima, who, like Burnett and Woodberry, was trained at UCLA's film school. Another former classmate, Iranian filmmaker Rafigh Pooya (*In Defense of the People*), organized the showcase. He bought and refurbished the Fox Venice theater with borrowed money, added a small cafe, and dedicated its programming to independent films from all over the world.

*My Brother's Wedding* and *Bless Their Little Hearts* are representative of the cooperative efforts of a group of Los Angeles-based Black independents who have worked together for years. There is not a production cooperative in the same vein as Visual Communications, a group of Asian American filmmakers that grew out of the Asian American movement. Rather, it is a network of directors—who also crew—that "rallies to each other's projects," according to filmmaker Julie Dash (*Four Women, Illusions*). Among the films that have drawn from this pool of talent are Alile Sharon Larkin's *Your Children Come Back to You*, Ben Caldwell's *Babylon Is Falling*, Barbara McCullough's work-in-progress *Horace Taproot: Musical Griot*, John Rier's *Black Images from the Screen*, as well as films by Dash, Woodberry, Burnett, Bernard Nicholas, and others. Added to this group are the many other Black independents working in Los Ange-

# NOTHING LIGHTS A F



Roy deCarava is the subject of Carroll Blue's award-winning documentary.

Courtesy filmmaker



# RE LIKE A DREAM DEFERRED



A UCLA production crew: (left to right) Orin Mitchell, Shigeko Suzuki, Julie Dash, Bernard Nicolas, Barbara McCullough, Ben Caldwell, and Charles Burnett.

Courtesy Julie Dash

les—Carroll Blue (*Vernette's World*, *Conversations with Roy de Carava*), Roy Campanella, Jr. (*Pass/Fail*, *The Thieves*, *Impressions of Joyce*), Stan Lathan (*Go Tell It on the Mountain*), Bill Duke (*The Killing Floor*). These filmmakers represent a major force in independent cinema that is changing the image of the Black experience on the screen.

During the 1970s, Hollywood discovered an antidote to its lagging box office in the Black youth market. The Steppin' Fetchits were replaced by blaxploitation pimps and superdudes. (Thus one studio could re-edit Bill Gunn's *Ganja and Hess* into the vampire movie *Blood Couple*.)

Needless to say, the project ideas of the new Black independents depart from such standard Hollywood fare. These independents are creating realistic glimpses of Black life—defined by Black characters, articulated by Black writers, and interpreted by Black actors and actresses. These filmmakers have embraced the breadth of the Black experience: families, women, artists, traditions, identity, political concerns, Africa. Dash and Larkin portray Black women who are neither street-smart whores nor background scenery to white plots, but complex characters who take control of their lives. Blue moves beyond Hollywood's fleeting interest in Black singing and

dancing to document Black visual artists. Woodberry and Burnett explore men in relation to their families—and the families they portray don't consist of welfare mothers and troubled teenagers. "The subject matter I work in doesn't lend itself to commercialism," said Burnett, who wrote the screenplay for Woodberry's *Bless Their Little Hearts*, a portrayal of a family's struggle to cope with the father's loss of his job. "If you go to producers and say, 'I want to do a story about a Black man and his family,' no one's interested. Dope, sex, drugs—that's what's marketable."

Some of these independent films also depart significantly from the typical Hollywood aesthetic



of glossy photography and fast-paced editing. Burnett's *Killer of Sheep*, the story of a slaughterhouse worker, and Woodberry's *Little Hearts* eschew such commercial signposts for a leisurely, almost ultra-realistic pace, emphasis on character rather than plot, and black-and-white cinematography.

Many in the group began their careers at UCLA, during or following the Ethno-Communications period, the affirmative and social action program which trained a generation of Third World filmmakers [see *The Independent*, March 1984]. There, they learned every aspect of the craft—and also confronted the lingering racism of the industry. Ben Caldwell remembers being one of two Blacks, out of hundreds of students, sitting through a film genre class screening of *Coal Black and the Seven Dwarfs* by the noted animator Steve Krantz. "Here was Krantz showing it and saying, 'This is a tribute to Black people.' And we said, 'Hey, it isn't.' But the rest of the class looked at us and said, 'Ah, come on, you guys are always complaining.' They actually booed us. I felt so humiliated."

"The experience at UCLA brought us together and kept us together," continued Caldwell. "We couldn't network with other students. So if we wanted to get jobs we relied on helping each other." By contrast, Burnett attributes the independents' collaborative relationship to the UCLA-bred workstyle. "Because of the UCLA method," he explained, "you crewed on other people's films. That carried over [when we left school], because we often don't have the funds to pay people. You do people a favor and they return it."

Due to the realities of Hollywood where, as McCullough says, "Racism is alive and well and keeping people from working," the need for mutual assistance was reinforced. "We all know how to do everything," Dash pointed out. "We all can shoot, do gaffing, electrical—right down to getting lunch. One minute you're a porter and the next minute you're a director of photography." They crew for each other for little or no pay. Says McCullough, "I think that, given our lack of resources, we do a hell of a lot, and our work says something."

Los Angeles has no low-cost film equipment/facilities access centers like New York's Young Filmmakers/Video Arts or Minneapolis' Film in the Cities, so independents there must rent from high-priced rental houses used to dealing with huge Hollywood budgets (although the Long Beach Museum of Art and EZTV provide access for videomakers). Therefore, they help each other out by sharing access to equipment when they have it (although they do not own equip-

ment themselves). Julie Dash—who has felt the double whammy of racism and sexism—must rent equipment through a male friend, because the rental houses wouldn't give her an open account. "They told me I could only rent through him, even though I was the filmmaker, and he only needed a light meter once in a while." The group has also developed networks of talented Black actors and actresses around Los Angeles. One young star who has emerged is Charles Burnett's niece Angie Burnett, who has appeared in *Bless Their Little Hearts* and *Your Children Come Back to You*.

Despite their accomplishments at UCLA (among others, Burnett won the coveted Louis B. Mayer prize of \$10,000 for best film, Larry Clark's *Passing Through* won first prize at the Moscow International Film Festival, and Gerima won a special award from the National Endowment for the Arts), the doors that opened for talented white students were often closed to them. "You became an independent because you didn't have a choice," said Burnett. "You're either independent or you just don't make a film, period. No one was beating down my door to make a major motion picture."

While Black independents in Los Angeles resist the pressures of Hollywood, they do respond to it in varying ways. "When I first started, I had a desire to make films for special audiences," explained Carroll Blue. "When I worked for Jane Fonda at IPC films, I got to see how to make films for a mass audience. Now I'm trying to reach that audience plus have my own special way of seeing things, like [Euzhan Palcy's] *Sugar Cane Alley*—that's the kind of film I'm trying to make. It's universal, but within a certain culture." Blue's latest film, *Conversations with Roy de Carava*, which won a Blue Ribbon at the American Film Festival, is a polished, highly visual, and tightly-cut document of the photographer's life which does not fail to discuss the racism that defined his career.

Caldwell, whose innovative *Babylon Is Falling* and *I and I* merge music and documentary imagery, regards the proximity to "the beast of Hollywood" as a positive challenge. "It makes independents who work on the periphery more intent and less compromising. It makes for good and different work." Caldwell places the range of approaches in Los Angeles' Black film community in a historical context. "The Black independents involved in media are rebuilding from the 1940s," he explained, referring to the pre-war surge of Black cinema which had its peak during the 1920s Black renaissance, led by filmmakers Oscar Micheaux and Noble Johnson. "There is a gap since then, a missing generation. So we are redefining Black film."

The true measure of this process of redefini-



A family struggles with unemployment in Billy Woodberry's dramatic feature *Bless Their Little Hearts*.

Courtesy Film Forum





*Bless Their Little Hearts* and *My Brother's Wedding* had their U.S. theatrical premieres at the Fox's festival of African and Black films.

Courtesy Fox International Theater

tion has been in the work itself. Films by Los Angeles' Black filmmakers have been screened at major festivals and aired on television around the world, and have won numerous awards. For example, in 1981, the Berlin International Film Festival forsook prizes to any films in competition, but gave special recognition to Burnett's first feature *Killer of Sheep*.

But many group members realize they are now ready to move on. As young filmmakers developing their craft, it was easy to keep justifying the free shoots as a learning experience. But now they all have years of experience, and some have the added pressures of family. McCullough must work temp jobs (after a two-year stint at a special effects house), Woodberry works in the UCLA film school equipment room, Dash is staying home to write and care for her newborn baby. "I'd like to do a film sometime where I'm paying people," said McCullough. "Working on each other's films—it just can't happen anymore. We are professional people looking for work. We have to survive. We have projects of our own that we want to do."

"We need an institution or a foundation," said Dash, "some kind of place where we can get equipment. It would be nice if we had a Black Filmmaker Foundation out here." There have been several attempts to organize a more formal structure. After the Third World Cinema Conference at Howard University in 1981, a coalition of Third World filmmakers was launched in Los Angeles. According to Burnett, "We met for awhile, but we're all filmmakers, so we had

to kind of come and go, and the organization became secondary." The Black filmmakers have tried over the years to form an organization, but have remained an *ad hoc* group coming together for shoots and around specific lobbying issues. In 1979, Caldwell refurbished a small house and turned it into a screening room with editing facilities and a writers' space in an effort to develop a creative home for local independents. It lasted until 1981, when his marriage fell apart, and he left for Washington, D.C. to teach film at Howard (he has since returned to Los Angeles). "When I had my place it was used to showcase people's work," Caldwell explained. "If people want critical analysis now, they have to get a screening room from AFI or UCLA. But there's a lack of consistency. Black independents need a place of their own." Caldwell is discussing the possibility of reviving the Third World coalition idea with Chicano and Asian American filmmakers. And Rafigh Pooya's new Fox International holds a great potential for providing a center for local independents. He plans to hold seminars and bring filmmakers in to meet their public as well as give theatrical runs to independent films.

"My personal belief," says Caldwell, "is that this whole group of us has just started—most of us have only done three or four works on our own. As we're developing the network is developing. We're just starting to have enough blood to pump into the system."

*Tracey Willard is a writer and poet in Los Angeles.*  
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## That

## Tune

PAULA R. SCHAAP

*Author's note: This article is presented only for the purposes of educating the independent filmmaker in some basic legal principles. It is not to be taken as legal advice. Every financing situation is different, the law constantly changes, and the laws in each state can vary widely. The independent filmmaker should, therefore, always consult his or her attorney before undertaking any course that may have legal ramifications.*

The Bard wrote that music is the food of love, but for many independent film and video-makers, music is the heart or soul of the projects they are struggling to bring to the screen. So we see Wheeler Dealer, record albums spilling from his arms, exclaiming, "And I've always wanted to put *Cry* in my picture, and then there's *Angel Baby* and *Charlie Brown*..."

As usual, our friend Wheeler Dealer has put the cart before the horse. The songs Wheeler remembers so fondly from childhood are owned by someone. And that someone may demand a hefty price for those songs, if Wheeler will be allowed to use them at all. Wheeler may find himself with a script or concept built around his favorite music, but no music. This article will discuss the acquisition of music licenses for music that has already been recorded or composed, as well as techniques used by independent producers to produce a quality soundtrack on a limited budget.

The owner of a copyrighted musical work owns three distinct rights. First, there are rights



Oncom International

Composer Mason Daring wrote the score to John Sayles's new film *The Brother from Another Planet*.

to the musical composition, that is, the words and music. Second is the right to perform the music. And last are the rights to the recording of the musical composition. Because of the nature of the music industry's structure, these rights will often be owned by different entities. The music publisher generally owns the rights to the composition as well as the performance rights, while the record company owns the rights to a particular recording of that composition. For example, Epic Records owns the rights to the Clash's recording of *Should I Stay or Should I Go?*, while the composition and performing rights are probably owned by a separate publishing company.

"The basic difference in procuring music for films is whether you are using recorded or live music," Barbara Zimmerman notes. She is the head of B.Z./Rights & Permissions, Inc., New York, a firm specializing in clearing rights for music for motion pictures and television. If

Wheeler intends to record his own version of *Light My Fire*, he will have to acquire a synchronization license from the music publisher. On the other hand, if he wants the Doors' version, he will need two licenses, one from the publisher and another from the record company. (The license to use music is called a synchronization license because it gives the filmmaker the right to "synchronize" the music with the film. Any ancillary rights, such as soundtrack albums, must be negotiated separately.)

Private rights clearing agencies, such as Zimmerman's, can provide assistance to the producer. If rights must be cleared quickly, or if there is a legal problem with the rights, an agency may save time and money. "Once I located a contract in an old box in a warehouse in order to track down the owner of the rights to a song," Zimmerman comments.

The fee for either a publisher's license or a record company's license depends on a number



of factors, including the amount of music that is used, the type of distribution projected for the film, the distribution territory, and the popularity of the music composition. For example, if Wheeler plans to show his films on college campuses and in film festivals, he can obtain a non-theatrical license which will cost less than a license for regular theatrical release. Additional fees are charged for cable and television. Performance fees are generally charged at the same time as the music publishing fee.

If Wheeler has decided to record his own music based on a copyrighted composition, he can go to the Harry Fox Agency in New York City, a clearinghouse which represents approximately 90% of music publishers. The Harry Fox agency will get quotations for the price of the license fee from the music publisher and relay these to the film producer. There is no fee to the film producer since the agency is non-profit and supported by the music publishers.

Many beginning filmmakers are not thinking in terms of recording their own music, however. In Wheeler's screenplay, for example, the heroine breaks up with the hero while Neil Diamond sings *Love on the Rocks* in the background. Torment and pain for the lovers; headaches for the film producer. "The fees for records can be very expensive," Zimmerman says. "Records are generally priced according to popularity, but I don't think older records are less expensive. They can be surprisingly high." The price may also increase because the record company's contract with the recording artist requires certain minimum payments.

In addition to the expense, Zimmerman notes that "about 20 to 30% of the time the record company will not grant the license, or the artist may nix the deal." For these reasons, Zimmerman strongly advises the independent producer to calculate the cost and know whether the requisite licenses can be obtained before building a film around a particular song. "It is a large mistake to put music in any kind of production without having an idea of what the end cost will be. You need to have a notion of reality." And playing that Top 40 single in the background won't help either. Zimmerman recalled a film which included a scene of a dance class. The record which the students were using for rehearsal happened to be *Fame*. The rights had not been cleared, and when the time came to clear them, the record company refused to grant a license.

One price-cutting technique is to buy cheaper rights first and purchase the more expensive

rights later. Zimmerman points out, however, that in many instances this may only delay the problem, "especially if you are trying to get the film or tape onto cable. Since the fees paid by cable are often low, you may still not have enough money for the rights." When Michael Korolenko made *Chords of Fame*, a docudrama about the late folksinger Phil Ochs, he obtained the music publishing license for non-theatrical release. He also paid the fee for cable rights because "we may want to show it on one of the smaller networks and we didn't want problems later." Korolenko echoed Zimmerman's caution about using recordings. "It's difficult to get the rights unless you know the right people." He was able to acquire rights to Ochs's *The Ballad of William Moore* from Vanguard for a small sum, but he had access to top people in the record company, and the album which contained the recording was out of print.

Cheaper alternatives to specific music properties can be found in music libraries, which stock what might best be described as "background music": the blowing of bugles as the cavalry charges, the surging of strings as lovers embrace. The fees charged by music libraries are less than the fees charged by publishers and record companies.

In the past, licenses were usually granted in perpetuity or for the duration of the music's copyright. Now, however, it is not uncommon to see licenses that are granted for only five years or less. If the producer is willing to pay, he or she may be able to negotiate a longer term.

There is yet another catch in the music licensing field. Even material that is in the public domain may require rights clearance if the video or filmmaker wants to use a particular arrangement. Clearances for rights to arrangements can also be handled through the Harry Fox Agency, as well as directly through the music publisher.

If a film is suitable for public television, the filmmaker may be able to take advantage of system-wide negotiated agreements which cover the use of published nondramatic music. Nondramatic music means that which is not a full-length opera, musical, or other musical-dramatic work, although nondramatic music may also cover excerpts from such works. The fees available under the public television agreements may save money. Generally, these fees are only available to nonprofit producers or to for-profit film or videomakers who are co-producing a film with a public television station. There are other aspects of music rights for public television production which are beyond the scope of this article. Film or videomakers who are considering a project aimed at public television should contact Gwen Woods, PBS's

director of Copy and Related Services in Washington, DC.

What is the enterprising Wheeler Dealer to do when his total music budget won't rent a room at the Plaza for a weekend? Maggie Renzi, a partner in A-Train Films, feels that the best solution is to work with a good composer. "We work with Mason Daring, a Boston composer. He composed music for [John Sayles's] *Return of the Secaucus Seven* and *Lianna*." He's also the composer for Sayles's new film, *The Brother from Another Planet*, released in September. The advantage of working with Daring, according to Renzi, is that he has an excellent sense of what Sayles is looking for in his music. "We don't use music libraries because with Mason we get exactly what we need." Daring is given a budget for the music; it is then his responsibility to hire musicians, arrange for studio time, and so forth. If the music comes in under budget, Daring is entitled to the excess. Arrangements are also made with him for deferments, bonuses, and points.

Sayles has also used recorded artists, including Bruce Springsteen for *Baby, It's You*. Springsteen was willing to release his work for less than the going rate because he knew Sayles and appreciated his work. Even so, Renzi notes, "Paramount never cleared the ancillary rights, so we don't have a videocassette."

*When the Mountains Tremble* is another example of a film that used a well-known artist. The movie tells the story of a young Guatemalan Indian woman who becomes a leader of the indigenous opposition movement to the Guatemalan government. Peter Kinoy, the producer, says that he approached Reuben Blades, one of the foremost *salsa* artists. Blades agreed to compose music for the soundtrack for a limited budget because he was sympathetic to the film's story. In addition to Blades's compositions, Kinoy located an amateur ethnomusicologist who had done extensive field recording in Guatemala. The ethnomusicologist donated music to the film for the cost of tape duplication.

The secret to a good soundtrack is to be inventive and to clear all rights. Once the rights are cleared, the soundtrack recorded, and Wheeler Dealer stops trying to sneak *A Hard Day's Night* behind the scene from *E.T.* (which also shouldn't be in the film without rights clearances), things should progress smoothly. If only we didn't have to worry about leaving Wheeler alone in the editing room with that Michael Jackson album. . . .

Paula R. Schaap is a writer and entertainment lawyer.

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# Is Kodavision's Place in the Home?

The camcorder AC power supply and video/audio interface unit is small and multi-voltage.

Photo: Bob Brodsky



BOB BRODSKY &  
TONI TREADWAY

The Kodak man came by the other day in his new beige (not yellow) car, and he brought Kodak's new Brownie: Kodavision 8mm video. "Kodavision" is the designation for a line of electronic imaging products through which Eastman Kodak Company plans to do for American families of the 1980s what the Brownie did during the first part of the century: make picture-taking a national passion. With its strong history in quality picture making, Kodak is moving into the video marketplace with contract technology from Matsushita and TDK.

After handling the Kodavision 2400 camcorder, we do not doubt that Kodak will succeed. Even at a list price of \$2400, this unit, through Kodak's sophisticated marketing strategies, will appeal to almost everyone who has an interest in movies. Kodavision works, and like the disc camera, does some things more handily than anything else on the market. (At the time of this writing, other 8mm video cameras, such as those produced by Polaroid, General Electric and RCA, were not yet available for testing.) It is, for example, extraordinarily light, small and easy to operate. It records video images of better-than-snapshot quality for 90 minutes on a metal evaporated tape cassette that is the same size (except for twice the thickness) of an ordinary audio cassette. The palm-size \$29.95 battery will power the camcorder for an entire cassette. It can be recharged in another 90 minutes, so two batteries on a shoot should suffice (use one while recharging the other). The recorder operates so quietly that no noise is transmitted to the audiotrack. Audio FM is

recorded, which should enable it to be bumped to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " or  $\frac{1}{2}$ " Dolby-encoded cassettes with negligible losses. Field playback is accomplished quickly through the viewfinder or through any available monitor.

In many situations, the Kodavision will serve people who want moving images but do not, for some reason or another, have access to other technologies. Lodged in Kodak's Consumer Division, Kodavision is also receiving a significant number of inquiries from industrial customers. In our tests of the unit, we were concerned with its applications for the independent producer.

There are technical qualities built-in to Kodavision 8mm video that will make it more attractive to some independents than consumer  $\frac{1}{2}$ " video technologies. First, although Kodak does not publish the blanking of this unit (since it's directed at non-professionals), the blanking that we examined (for 3 hours) is acceptable for editing. We measured 20 lines, 10.4 microseconds. This was a surprise. Second, the  $\frac{1}{2}$ " Newvicon tube can render a rather quiet (grain-free) image in very low light. We compared low-light (f/1.2) images from the Kodavision with those from the RCA "small wonder" CCD camera. Kodavision provided a low-noise dove gray-and-white image, compared to the CCD's noisy colored image. The stated signal-to-noise ratio of Kodavision is only 43db, which is about 15db below that of the better cameras that independents are using today. However, because S/N ratios are less significant in well-lit scenes, and because the Newvicon tube used in Kodavision has a diminished chroma (color) output in low light, this camera delivers a rather decent picture.

In adequate light, Kodavision provided strong colors and acceptable edging (always a problem for single-tube cameras). The colors showed occasional horizontal striping through transitional zones, as from a green tree across a white sidewalk onto a dark pavement. Although the Kodak man suggested that the Kodavision palette has been designed to duplicate our beloved Kodachrome's colors, we found they were not the same (on either a properly or improperly set-up monitor). Kodachrome is film and Kodavision is video. However, Kodavision

showed a remarkable ability to handle high contrast scenes with little "ringing," that dark line (or lines) that one often sees at the transition point from bright sky into a shaded subject.

When bumped to  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", the Kodavision image looked as good as the images from single-tube industrial-grade color cameras of just a year ago. Edited onto  $\frac{1}{2}$ " VHS, the images looked as good as most VHS original material. This leads us to speculate that some independents who have mini-budgets and need video with portability might jump  $\frac{1}{2}$ " consumer technology altogether, shoot Kodavision on metal tape, and then bump and edit on  $\frac{3}{4}$ " directly.

Kodavision is an entirely different imaging medium than 8mm (or Super-8) film. Kodavision images will be different not only in technical quality but in aesthetics. Used for the same project, each medium has aesthetic strengths and weaknesses. But before speculating on these we have to mention the extraordinary power of Kodak marketing:

8mm video will flood the marketplace, further obscuring Super-8 and 8mm film. While we are convinced that Super-8 film, processing and equipment will be available for a very long time, they will become increasingly difficult to find. All Kodak Super-8 film will soon come from Paris (but don't worry—some New York dealers have been buying their Super-8 Kodachrome in Europe for years). Processing—even Kodak "quality" processing—will continue to be variable, and will take a week or two. Film and processing prices will not decline, keeping the cost of 90 minutes of film with sound at \$400 to \$500.

If the above is sufficient to discourage the unfunded moviemaker from using Super-8, consider the limitations of 8mm video. It will present the usual array of video problems, and while these may be no more objectionable or costly than film limitations, they must be considered. Sometimes the automatic white balance of the camcorder will settle for something other than white as white, a particular cassette will stick to the recording head or develop a crease, or the recording head will clog.

The aesthetic strength of Super-8, aided and abetted by the palette and transparency of



Kodachrome, lies with the filmmaker's creativity. The filmmaker can choose a myriad of controls on a Super-8 camera: framing rate, single framing, rapid burst, exposure control, special effects. Combine this with pocket portability, instant readiness, unintimidating presence and the lack of real-time continuity in filmmaking (even while watching an extended scene) and you have something that video, such as Kodavision, cannot provide. But for casual documentation, you can't beat the fun of Kodavision.

8mm is better suited for "home movies" than film ever was. Its strength lies in what happens in intimate surroundings long after everyone has forgotten that the camera was turned on and put down on the sofa. Recording time is cheap and Kodavision has very low-light capability (20 lux). It is a virtually silent one-small-piece unit. Artists, trainers, psychiatrists, coaches, teachers and directors will all want one. Rich parents will record their kids' athletic events, recitals and school speeches.

Viewer-be-damned "home movies" is a clear possibility with 8mm video. Initially, the tapes will provide an unprecedented view of family events. Then the tapes will be available for those who can face their terrible durations. Finally, the real test of home movies will fall upon them: their archival potential.

We know that 8mm black-and-white and Kodachrome movies from the 1920s and '30s have held their detail and color very well. They are accessible today because functioning 8mm film projectors are available. With care and skill, 8mm films can also be converted to sometimes astoundingly high quality video—far higher than anything available from consumer video. We don't know whether it will be possible to find compatible video playback equipment for 8mm video in 2035 (although the images will probably still remain encoded on the tape). However paranoid this may seem, this concern is legitimate when thinking about home movies. Like all candid photography, home movies are a strong influence for shaping democratic behavior. The media we use needs to be available to as many future generations as we can permit.

So how does 8mm video image-making stack up against Super-8 film? Film can be viewed as film or as video. Kodachrome endures 40-plus years with its colors intact. Film has a resolution not yet available in video. Film has greater latitude, revealing more tonal distinctions than video. Eight millimeter film transferred to video can render superior image quality to anything one can obtain from any consumer-type video. Super-8-originated images, transferred to video, have

been winning awards all over the country in competitions open to all film and video independent production (whether or not they were transferred as edited film or edited in video). Kodavision was created for home movie people, and like Super-8 film, it will perform best when asked to do what it was designed to do.

We see lots of artists reaching back into home movie images to create new works of art. Early

images are retrievable on Kodachrome, and hopefully, artists of the future will be able to gain access to their childhoods recorded on 8mm video as well as 8mm film.

*Bob Brodsky and Toni Treadway are the authors of Super 8 in the Video Age, which is available in both Spanish and English. Treadway is a board member of the Boston Film/ Video Foundation.*

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# Cinematic Civil War

### The Spanish Civil War in American and European Films

by Marjorie A. Valleau

UMI Research Press, 1978, 207 pp., \$39.95

The Spanish Civil War inflamed the passions of millions of Americans. Over 3,200 Abraham Lincoln Brigade volunteers journeyed surreptitiously to Spain and risked their lives to defeat Hitler and Mussolini before France and Europe fell to their armies. In 1938, 76% of the citizenry of the U.S. who had an opinion favored repeal of an embargo on the sale of armaments to the Spanish Republic. Pro-Francoists were also busy, lobbying Congress to retain the embargo, and, in one instance, picketing the Hollywood movie *Blockade* for its pro-Republic "communist" stance. But, in 1984, it's not easy to comprehend what the pickets were fussing about.

All six Hollywood films relating to the Spanish Civil War analyzed in this book downplay or distort the fundamental issues of the war. With few exceptions, the films are not concerned with the distinguishing facts of the conflict, such as the arming and organizing of men and women into militias; the right-wing military rebellion; the unprecedented formation of the International Brigades; the violent struggles within the Republican left; the false neutrality of the West; or even Germany and Italy's military intervention.

In *The Spanish Civil War in American and European Films*, Marjorie Valleau observes that most U.S.-made films subverted political content by using the war as a backdrop to conventional stories of intrigue and romance—although *Blockade* does take a relatively more political stance by protesting foreign aggression (without explicitly naming Germany or Italy). Yet its unlikely plot, swelling music, and moralistic dialogue places it within the realm of hokey Hollywood fare. In a silly ruse to forestall controversy, the characters and cities are given Italian names, and such words as "loyalist," "Franco," and even "fascism" are never uttered. Ironically, *Blockade* was used by the House Committee on Un-American Activities in the late 1940s as evidence of screenwriter John Howard Lawson's alleged subversiveness.



Women's Battalion members look up at Nationalist planes in *The Last Train from Madrid*.

*The Spanish Civil War* is a concise, rewarding analysis of the aesthetics, content, and ideological underpinnings of 11 narrative films about Europe and North America. Not surprisingly, the section on the American films reveals more about the banality and myth-making of melodrama than about the war. This alone

makes it a relevant work in light of Hollywood's parallel failure to deal honestly with the Vietnam War.

While films from both continents tend to highlight characters who fight for deeply held democratic beliefs, the European films are more



politically partisan and stylistically novel. For example, Andre Malraux's groundbreaking *Sierra de Teruel*, based on his novel *L'Espoir* and influenced by his friend Sergei Eisenstein, introduced the cliff-hanging, poignant bomber-crew-in-mission sequence, later used by Hollywood World War II movies. It is also the only film examined by Valteau in which a collective, not an individual, is the hero. Director Alan Resnais plays with concepts of time in *La Guerre Est Finie*, using a flash-forward technique to depict the hopes and fears of Yves Montand's spiritually tired revolutionary. On the other hand, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a conventional American film, unfolds in a strictly linear progression and thus misses the advantage of the flashbacks in Hemingway's novel.

Valteau understands the subtle impact of these differences when she writes, "The American group utilizes a studio style characterized by realistic cinematic techniques and linear narrative structure which fosters viewer involvement and lessens the opportunities for objectively questioning the political issues the films sometimes try to raise. Conversely, the European films employ more innovative cinematic modes which lessen linear temporality and promote analysis of the filmic political content."

The book's chief problem lies in Valteau's failure to push its analysis far enough. She notes Hollywood's practice of building a story with atypical characters and outlandish plots, but not the fact that viewers are thereby protected from seeing highly politicized workers and peasants taking events into their own hands. This may stem from the author's superficial understanding of the war, reflected in a weak synopsis of events and in a number of strange contentions—such as a statement that the Republicans summarily shot Spaniards for practicing religion and that the Soviet Union is almost as much at fault for the Republic's defeat as the fascists.

There are other examples: the author mentions that the 1943 release of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* neatly supported official World War II policies of intervention in other countries, pitting American lives against fascism. (Paramount also maintained that the film would appeal to the growing number of "lonely women" who, missing their soldier husbands, lovers, and sons, wanted to see escapist romances.) However, the relationship of government agenda to the content of Hollywood films is not explored further. Other pertinent questions also aren't asked. Do the films which were based on novels differ in comparison to their source, and what do the changes mean? What screenplays have not been produced and why? Sidney Lumet's *They Shall Not Pass*, for instance, was never

filmed, and Hollywood 10 members Alvah Bessie (also a Lincoln Brigade veteran) and Ring Lardner, Jr. wrote screenplays about the Lincoln Brigade that were not produced.

Nevertheless, Valteau recognizes the irony that in the U.S., where the industry is not circumscribed by state censorship or subsidization, films are rendered blandly non-controversial by "a more pervasive kind of censorship, formed by commercial, government, social and religious interests." In contrast, European films, most of which are subsidized by the state and subject to government scrutiny, are markedly more innovative, realistic and partisan. —Sam Sills

*Sam Sills is co-producer and co-director of the feature documentary The Good Fight: The Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War.*

## Anguish and Whimsy

### A Trumpet to Arms: Alternative Media in America

by David Armstrong

Boston: South End Press, 1984, 359 pp., \$9.00 (paper)

*Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one.*

—A.J. Liebling

*Without an alternative culture, there can be no alternative press.*

—Alexander Cockburn

*If you get in bed with the devil, you'd better be prepared to fuck.*

—Tom Donahue

(ex-station manager, KSAN, San Francisco)

These three quotes illustrate some of the meatier issues which surface in David Armstrong's well-written but often sketchy *A Trumpet to Arms: Alternative Media in America*. First, the First Amendment has not, in practice, guaranteed equal access to the means of expression. Second, the alternative press of the '60s and '70s was a direct articulation of the counterculture—Armstrong calls it "the central nervous system in the [counterculture's] body politic"—and, therefore, both objectively documented and subjectively acted out that culture's contradictions. Third, the "selling" of the counterculture was unavoidable *sans* a true revolution and the destruction of the market economy.

*A Trumpet to Arms*, which takes its title from

a line in Tom Paine's revolutionary poem "The Liberty Tree," concentrates on the short but crucial period 1965-81. Armstrong realizes that "the sixties" were not so much a chronological decade which ended in 1969 as a particular set of attitudes and institutions which lasted until the U.S. pullout from Vietnam in 1973—an act which, paradoxically, disoriented many people even as it thrilled them. He quotes *San Francisco Bay Guardian* founder Bruce Brugmann's warning to Bay-area radicals: "Sooner or later the war will be over, and you'll have to go back to being ordinary." Armstrong distinguishes between the "underground" media of the war years (1966-73), which espoused "the unholy trinity of revolution, sex and drugs," and its successor, "alternative" media, which "backed away from the confrontational style of the underground." He discusses newspapers, magazines, films, video, and radio, although his treatment of the latter three is sporadic.

Armstrong's main strength resides in his ability to distinguish between various tendencies within "the Movement," discerning the disparate but interrelated strands which converged to produce the far-from-monolithic counterculture. He knows the difference between a Weatherman and a Yippie, Irwin Silber and Abbie Hoffman, *New Left Notes* and the *San Francisco Oracle*, *Ramparts* and *Rolling Stone*, Robert Kramer and Nam June Paik. In fact, his major theme is the tension between "anguish and whimsy" which wracked the counterculture. And, although this tension eventually destroyed the movement, both its elements existed simultaneously—and thus often painfully—with in most individuals, groups, and publications. "Papers such as the *Los Angeles Free Press*," Armstrong notes, "were likely to position a first-person account of taking LSD at a love-in on the same page with a meditation on the nature of imperialism." Unlike some "political" historians, Armstrong doesn't shy away from the crucial, if contradictory, role that drugs and sex played in forming the New Left.

However, in his attempt to be comprehensive, Armstrong often formulates useless generalizations. For instance, he locates '60s filmmakers on the side of the "anguished" and videomakers in the camp of the "whimsical." After a brief discussion of documentarian Emile de Antonio ("a middle-aged New Yorker who had long been on the fringes of both the left and the artistic avant-garde") and the militant Newsreel film collectives, he notes that "video...activists... followed McLuhan rather than Eisenstein or Godard." Such a statement is—despite obvious and numerous exceptions—broadly accurate, but it is also superficial. After all, an entire book



# RAT

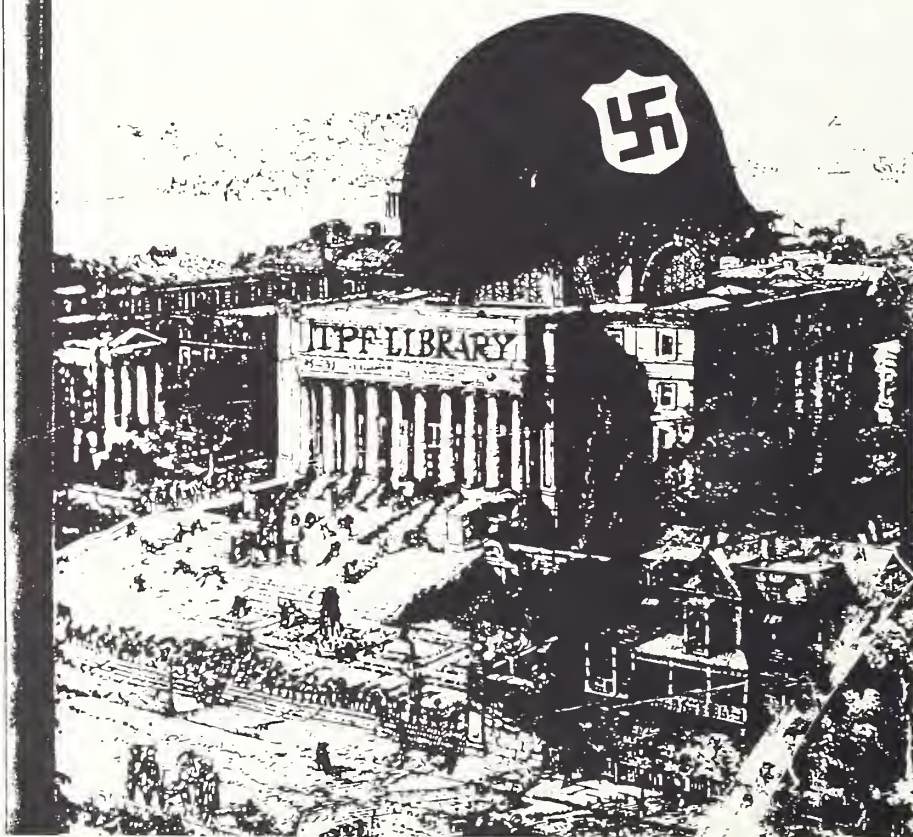
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## HEIL COLUMBIA



*Rat*, which covered the Columbia riots from the inside, is analyzed in David Armstrong's book *A Trumpet to Arms*.

could be written on the politics of film vs. video-makers. Armstrong raises more questions than he answers.

Some of Armstrong's emphases also seem highly idiosyncratic, as opposed to historically justified. I'm not sure why, for instance, the Yippies deserve far more space than SDS, or why *Mother Jones* is carefully and lovingly analyzed while *In These Times* rates only two very brief mentions. Armstrong is also particularly weak on the black media; *The Black Panther* seems to be the only black paper he's read.

The second half of *Trumpet* traces the development of the post-Vietnam, post-Woodstock, post-confrontational "alternative" media: the packaging of the counterculture (exemplified by *Rolling Stone*, peevishly described as an "innocuous... bridge over troubled waters"); the rise of feminist and regional presses; anti-nuclear films; computer and "New Age" magazines; cable and low-power TV. Armstrong *tries* to be upbeat: "That the really juicy stuff happened in those fabulous, faded sixties is rooted more in nostalgia than political reality," he writes. But this portion of the book is, perhaps necessarily, less absorbing than the first. Simply put, Armstrong is dealing with uninspiring material here—the history, and results, of the New Left's failure—as chapter titles such as "Ten Great Places to Find Croissants After Midnight" and "Aquarian Enterprise" indicate. Nostalgic or not, I find *Columbia Revolt* superior to *No Nukes*, *Ramparts* to *CoEvolution Quarterly*, Wilfred Burchett to *Mother Jones*, and I'd much rather read about the crazy Weather Underground than the clammy Clamshell Alliance.

*A Trumpet to Arms* will satisfy those looking for a basic overview of the counterculture press. Readers seeking a complex, detailed history of the period should look further; a good place to start is Kirkpatrick Sales's excellent *SDS*. But, especially in the first half, Armstrong's book is at least engaging and occasionally revealing. (I especially enjoyed his account of Henry Kissinger lifting restrictions on Wilfred Burchett's Cuban passport and inviting him to breakfast at the White House in 1971; later events show that the two did not see eye-to-eye.) *Trumpet* also reminded me that the New Left had headline-writers to rival those of the current *New York Post*. Among my favorites were HEIL COLUMBIA (*Rat*, 1968), LET SAIGONS BE BY-GONES (*Berkeley Barb*, 1975), and, from an undated *Black Panther*, PIGS RUN AMUCK! In 1984, when Rupert Murdoch owns the *Village Voice*, *The Big Chill* is touted as a "message" film, and even stockbrokers get stoned, it's nice to remember such things.

—Susan Linfield



## Feminist Film Culture

### Women's Reflections: The Feminist Film Movement

by Jan Rosenberg

Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979, 143 pp., \$39.95

In the 1980s, when feminism seems once again to be a dirty word even among many who have benefited from feminist struggles, Jan Rosenberg's *Women's Reflections: The Feminist Film Movement* reminds us that less than a decade ago issues of sexism and equality for women in American society were the focus of widespread social and cultural debate. A significant body of work from this era exists in the films of women producer/directors. *Women's Reflections*, Rosenberg's dissertation, traces the history of feminist filmmaking from the little-known films of the early twentieth-century suffrage movement to the mainstream notoriety of the 1960s and '70s, when the women's movement was a pet topic of the mass media. The book also offers an informed prediction about the prospects of women filmmakers in the egocentric, success-crazed "me generation."

Rosenberg examines the differences and similarities within the women's film movement by dividing both films and filmmakers into social documentary and avant-garde, and older and younger feminists. Though the distinctions may be a bit fine, they are useful in illustrating the polarities and changes which have caused contemporary women filmmakers, many beginning their careers during the most active days of the feminist movement, to shift from making overtly political films to more personal fiction works with strong narrative structure. Throughout, the tensions between "public," i.e., political, and "private," or personal, concerns are shown to underlie developments in feminist filmmaking.

Rosenberg draws parallels between the concerns of specifically feminist filmmakers and the larger independent film movement. Feminist film and independent film grew up together, sharing similar problems in access to materials, distribution, exhibition, and critical evaluation. However, the relationship between feminist and independent film is more than an accident of birth. As the author observes, economic and cultural sanctions that barred women from the commercial film industry dictated that important films by women would first appear as part of the independent media sphere, and she suggests that the feminist film movement's direction was necessarily shaped by the economics and class structure of a male-dominated capitalist system. But, from the start, many of the early

leaders in the feminist film movement revealed aspirations toward "making it" in the commercial film industry.

Despite the essential marginality of feminist films and filmmakers, Rosenberg notes the predominance of upper middle-class Caucasian women in the movement. The reasons for this, she asserts, are again economic: the expense of production versus the relatively small return on investment requires the existence of a financial support system unavailable to those born outside the magic middle-class circle. Still, such women as Michelle Parkerson, Madeline Anderson, and Ayoka Chenzira produced films at the same time as Susan Kleckner, Geri Ashur, and Martha Coolidge. Yet Rosenberg interviewed no women filmmakers of color for this study. Perhaps the glaring omission of women from other classes and ethnic backgrounds is due to the homogeneous quality of the feminist exhibition/distribution network during the 1970s.

Likewise, the dissipation of the feminist film movement as a political entity may be traced to its failure to cultivate class and ethnic diversity. In a recent conversation on this subject, Michelle Parkerson noted that visibility is determined by those who control programming for public events such as festivals, exhibitions, and screenings. Had Rosenberg gone outside her own milieu in search of works excluded from the academic journals and established feminist literature, her research might have resulted in a more comprehensive, and accurate, profile.

Academic, historical, and critical feminist writing, interviews with women filmmakers, distribution catalogues and other documents from women's film festivals provided the primary sources for Rosenberg's study. Some of the information—for instance, the reference to the now-defunct Serious Business Company as a major distributor of women's films—is dated, indicative of the rapid evolution of the political and economic climate. The struggle to preserve a history which includes women's contributions to society and culture is far from finished, but Rosenberg's effort in this competent and clearly-written investigation of the feminist film movement represents a step in that direction.

—Mary Guzzy

## In the Midnight Hour

### Midnight Movies

by J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum

New York: Harper & Row, 1983, 338 pp., \$9.95 (paper)

This book was originally meant to be reviewed

by another writer. But she returned it one morning, declining the assignment because, she claimed, *Midnight Movies* was too "fluffy" and not, I assume, the province of a serious book reviewer. But she looked pale, her voice quavered, her hand shook as she handed the plain brown package to the editor, and as she left the office she seemed oblivious to her surroundings—like something, I have realized since reading *Midnight Movies*, out of *Night of the Living Dead*!

Had reading *Midnight Movies* turned this individual into a walking zombie, and, if so, how was I to read it without succumbing likewise? I needed a plan. I contacted the publisher. He suggested placing a cross between me and the book as I read it. But, he said, as his voice trailed off, that didn't work in all cases. I declined his invitation to lunch.

I turned the book over in my hands wondering how to safely enter its mysteries. The plastic cover felt slimy to the touch. I flipped the pages quickly, not letting my eyes linger too long, and saw they were generously stocked with stills from some of the most unappetizing movies ever made. The solution came to me in a flash: if I read in direct sunlight in the heat of the day, the sinister forces of the midnight world couldn't escape the chilly confines of the book's pages. So I ended up reading *Midnight Movies* in the only possible place—the beach.

But the book proved dangerously suggestive. When I read about *Night of the Living Dead*, every happy couple walking down the shore took on the "bluish pallor" of George Romero's walking dead. When I read about *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, I imagined that that same couple, ice chest in tow, headed for the dunes, were really Brad and Janet, about to have their innocent sexual idyll disrupted by an irresistible transvestite who "hits the hormones of both sexes." By the time I got to *El Topo*, I was sure that the police officer advancing on horseback, obscured by waves of heat rising from the sand, was the avenging and exterminating angel of Brontis Jodorowsky's film, ready to calmly violate, dismember, and blow out the brains of every bather. So I went for a swim. I felt like I needed a cleansing after each chapter of *Midnight Movies*.

Although *Midnight Movies* suffers from the absence of a conclusion, Hoberman and Rosenbaum do provide a history of the genesis of the underground film scene—Stan Vanderbeek, Mike and George Kuchar, Jonas Mekas, Andy Warhol, et al.—which excellently frames the book. Profiles and interviews with the likes of Romero, Jodorowsky, and David Lynch (*Era-serhead*) are alternately chilling and amusing. And for all his perversions, John Waters comes



off as quite appealing.

Since its inception as a fringe activity for cultists and movie buffs, the genre of the midnight movie has become institutionalized. Tonight in New York there are a dozen films to choose from at midnight, many first run, while four theaters (all downtown) feature screenings of more typically alternative pics like *Clockwork Orange*, *Taxi Driver*, *Liquid Sky*, *Road Warrior* and *A Boy and His Dog* every midnight of the week. But while midnight screenings have proliferated, the original intensity of the experience as described by Hoberman and Rosenbaum has been diluted. Thus, a nostalgic aura surrounds the book. What allows most the films they discuss to be mentioned in the same breath is a sense of their relation to the upheavals of the '60s. Whether in celebration (as in *Rocky Horror*) or hallucinogenic reaction (*El Topo*), post-'60s alienation (*Eraserhead*) or mockery (*Pink Flamingos*), the common thread or piano wire that ties the earlier films together is their challenge to participate, rather than just observe. Maybe that was the difference between midnight and matinees. —Robert Aaronson

## Behind the Boob Tube

### Inside Prime Time

by Todd Gitlin

New York: Pantheon Books, 1983, 369 pp., \$16.95

Todd Gitlin's *Inside Prime Time* will probably appeal to a lot of readers who never watch television. And while it is not necessary to be a viewer to appreciate Gitlin's book, familiarity with the tube does help. For only a regular TV watcher could have a highly developed enough sense of irony to get the deadly serious joke that is the television industry. Only someone who has witnessed a typical television season can properly appraise the waste, excess and irrationality involved in what is laughingly called Hollywood "decision-making." For such viewer-readers, Gitlin's entertaining insider's account of the prime time world provides a welcome gloss on this week's *TV Guide*.

In researching his book, Gitlin, a sociology professor at Berkeley, talked to over 200 industry executives and producers. Among them were a number of world-class *schmoozers* who went cheerfully on record to dump on the industry that puts Mercedes in their garages. They tell tales of network execs who win promotions because they "give good lunch," writers who get assignments because industry friends know the

Mister Robot considers love "a million years in the future" in Mike Kuchar's *Sins of the Fleshapoids*.



mortgage payments are overdue, and deal-making agents who suck profits from shows whose scripts they've never read. Gitlin professes surprise at the openness of his sources. But, in a world where failure is the norm and accountability is minimal, the outspoken have little to fear. A wily inside player can always call in a marker when the chips are down.

Gitlin's first book-length excursion into the television business was *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*. In that work, Gitlin addresses the news end of the industry, focusing on the fate of Students for a Democratic Society at the hands of the establishment media—and vice versa. As an early member (and former president) of SDS, Gitlin tries to make retrospective sense of how the Movement "went wrong." As an activist turned academic, he relies explicitly on the wisdom of leftist cultcrit in drawing his conclusions. And in the spirit of the still-hopeful '70s, the book offers suggestions for future strategies alongside its theoretical diagnosis of the past.

In the breezier *Prime Time*, Gitlin holds on to his leftie critical edge, but abandons any attempt

at a theoretical accounting. The lines that were once clearly drawn between young radicals and news execs have vanished. Today's crop of TV makers are no longer father figures in a generational war, as suggested in *The Whole World Is Watching*, but contemporaries. Gitlin even shares up-from-the-counterculture personal histories with a few of them. We learn that Michael Kozoll, co-creator of *Hill Street Blues*, spent the late '60s in San Francisco working in a pottery collective and doing anti-war work. Writer-producer Gary David Goldberg, author of a failed pilot about journalists covering the Vietnam War, counts the founding of the Organic Daycare Center in Berkeley among his accomplishments. Apparently these guys still care about social issues, and they're still pretty hip; it is only natural that Gitlin likes them. Yet the bemused cynical detachment with which they and their colleagues view their own work ultimately infects the book as a whole.

Gitlin's conclusion—that the "problem of American television is the problem of American culture as a whole"—may very well be true, but it registers as little more than a sigh. He suggests that American audiences get the television they





deserve and that programming will never change until "publics organize to insist on it." (Organizing to insist on change, by the way, is exactly what the far right has attempted in their advertiser boycott campaign, but Gitlin does not like them any better for it. His disapproval of their efforts seems both inconsistent and sentimental. After all, you cannot impinge on freedom of expression where none exists, and all Gitlin's evidence tells us that there is no such thing in TV-land.)

The only comfort *Inside Prime Time* offers is that, after reading it, you can laugh with producer Aaron Spelling (*The Mod Squad*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Dynasty*) instead of being laughed at by him. And isn't insider's laughter one of the consolations that gets many a '60s survivor through his or her typical '80s day? Take our Organic Daycare Center-founder, Goldberg. In 1983, after Gitlin had completed his research, Goldberg scored on prime time with a half-hour comedy series, *Family Ties*. Its "concept" involves the trials and tribulations of parents who came of age in the '60s and who now have conservative, success-oriented kids. Test your irony quotient on that one. —Debra Goldman ■

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## Making It in Hong Kong



Courtesy filmmaker

Mira Nair's *So Far from India* was screened at the Hong Kong International Film Festival.

The Hong Kong International Film Festival has become Asia's premiere showcase of international cinema. Now in its eighth year, the HKIFF is a non-competitive, two-week event, usually held in April. This year, 146 films from 27 countries were presented in five theaters concurrently, running each day from 10 a.m. until midnight.

According to its organizers, the primary purpose of the festival is to present a "cultural exchange medium for Hong Kong's public through which it can reflect its own culture and way of living." The festival does in fact present world class cinema to the people of Hong Kong and Asia. Indeed, except for the HKIFF, Hong Kong and its neighbors have little exposure to many such films. And with the cancellation of this year's Asian International Film Festival in Manila, the HKIFF provides the best window through which to view representative Asian cinema in one place.

This year three American features were presented—Slava Tsukerman's *Liquid Sky*, Martin Scorsese's *King of Comedy*, and Sam Fuller's

*White Dog*. Although *Liquid Sky* was this year's only independent work, past years have included such films as *The Atomic Cafe*, *All By Myself*, *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, *Chan Is Missing*, *Koyannisqaatsi*, *Seraphita's Diary*, and *Smithereens*. Most of this year's attention on American film was focused on Martin Scorsese, who was honored with a retrospective of his early short independent films.

Wayne Wang also made an appearance at the festival with a 30-minute trailer for his upcoming *Dim Sum*, which was billed with Godard's *Prenom: Carmen*. Curiously, Wang is not considered an American independent here, since he is originally from Hong Kong and is married to one of Hong Kong's biggest film stars, Cora Miao (seen here in Ann Hui's *Boat People*).

Three programs of Asian American films were also presented, including Christine Choy and J.T. Takagi's *Bittersweet Survival*, Mira Nair's *So Far from India*, Ruby Yang's *Matrimony*, Michael Uno's *The Silence*, Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Reassemblage* and my own *Freckl-*

*ed Rice*. However, these programs were relegated to decidedly non-prime time slots, often playing against major features at one or more of the other theaters. *Freckled Rice* played against Yoshimitsu Morita's *The Family Game* on a weekday afternoon.

Hong Kong has one of the highest concentrations of daily newspapers and magazines in the world, including two English-language dailies, so press coverage for the festival is more than adequate. Many if not all of the major American films and filmmakers received lead stories in the local (and other Asian) press. A TV interview was taped with *Freckled Rice*'s co-producer Yuet-Fung Ho for a program on Asian American film airing at a future date. Even so, with an average of 18 programs daily, some of the lesser-known films inevitably received little or no press coverage.

The physical treatment of films at the festival is first class. The projection and acoustics in the four theaters was very good, and a fifth room was set up for video projection. Most of the





Andrew Horn's *Doomed Love* had a better fate as an entry in the Young Forum section of the Berlin International Film Festival.



140,000 seats available during the festival were sold out, and when there was an overwhelming demand some programs were repeated in idle time slots. *Prenom: Carmen* and the *Dim Sum* trailer were screened an additional four times on the final day of the festival.

Asia was represented by 23 dramatic features from India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Hong Kong. These films included the latest efforts by Japan's Kon Ichikawa and India's Mrinal Sen. The films ranged in subject matter from historical epics and political exposes to family dramas, humanist studies and action adventures. From China came five films (including one co-production with a Hong Kong company). These films indicate that China is giving a freer hand to its filmmakers; little of the old socialist realism remains. Three of the films dealt with the ill-fated Cultural Revolution's aftereffects, and the remaining two made historical allusions to it. Features from Ireland, Israel, Turkey and Cuba were also shown.

Despite this line-up, Shu Kei, the festival's international program coordinator, said she has some "reservations" about the festival's selections. The festival, she said, "overrepresents the more technically advanced cinemas of Western Europe at the expense of films from Eastern Europe, South America and the Third World. This has 'foregrounded' the issue of how to liberate ourselves from the domination of Western capitalist culture."

Hong Kong's own cinema, which has been gaining world recognition in recent years, is analyzed in an excellent new publication, *A Study of Hong Kong Cinema in the Seventies*. It discusses all the major Hong Kong cinema figures of that era, including Anne Hui, Allen Fong and King Hu. This publication is one of several that the HKIFF produces each year on various subjects, in addition to a very handsome and detailed catalogue of the festival's program in English and Chinese. —Stephen Ning

*The HKIFF is definitely a great excuse for making a trip to Hong Kong. Filmmakers interested in showing their films in the festival should contact: Jerry Liu, Hong Kong International Film Festival, Festival Office, Cultural Services Dept., Room 807, New World Office Building, Tsinshatsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Entries may be in 16 or 35mm. Feature-length films are preferred, although shorts are not excluded. Videocassettes are acceptable for selection (PAL standard). Deadline is generally in mid-December. Filmmakers' request for reimbursement of selected films are considered. The festival generally treats attending filmmakers well,*

*either inviting them for an expenses-paid trip or, at the least, providing accommodations for filmmakers who happen to be in town at the time of the festival.*

*Stephen Ning is the producer/director of Freckled Rice.*

## Berlin: Das Film Kapital

Nineteen eighty-four was a banner year for U.S. independent participation in the highly visible Berlin Film Festival. Over 25 U.S. films were screened in the International Forum of Young Cinema and in the information section. The festival also includes a competition section, primarily limited to big-budget, mainstream industry features; a children's film festival; and finally a film market with a separate application and deadline. The presence of the market creates an atmosphere of serious business activity which, if taken advantage of, can have far-reaching benefits for participating filmmakers.

According to Howard Brookner, whose *Burroughs* was in the Forum in 1984, Berlin is a "good place to do business. The selectors are supportive and have lots of contacts. Go see them as soon as you get there." A computer is on-line for information regarding the distributors and buyers who have arrived, and there is a phone contact book if you want to reach them. Brookner was told that the press (up to 1,500 journalists attend) was interested in talking to him and that the festival organizers would put him in touch with them. Unfortunately, he was misinformed as to the screening date of his film, so he arrived too late to "meet the press"—but not to press his case for his new work-in-progress (entitled *Jet Lag: A Portrait of Robert Wilson*) with European marketers.

"Nice publicity packages are helpful for selling the film that brought you there," Brookner said. "[Industry] people won't go to see films unless someone they know recommends it to them." A couple of good reviews in a "small but well-selected" press kit will stimulate more interest than simply telling people about the film. If you do have a new project to push, as Brookner did, bring a "neat professional package" that includes a typed title sheet, a short synopsis, bios of the principals, and some kind of concise wish list. Brookner found that the people who make decisions don't necessarily attend festivals, so if you give their representatives a packet of information, they will have something to bring back to the home office. While he didn't actually seal any deals there

(a rare occurrence anywhere), he was able to meet producers and gauge the television buyers' interest in *Burroughs*, which he passed along to his distributor.

The Forum of Young Cinema, which is the outlet for most independents ('84 selections included Chris Choy's *Mississippi Triangle*, Billy Woodberry's *Bless Their Little Hearts*, Andrew Horn's *Doomed Love*, and about half a dozen others) is programmed by Ulrich Gregor and the Friends of the German Film Archive, which tries to buy a print of each selected film and subtitle it. In addition, if a film doesn't find a distributor, they may take it for distribution themselves for small screenings on a non-exclusive basis. For pre-selection, films may be seen in New York; contact Gordon Hitchens (212-877-6856) or the AIVF Festival Bureau, which also has entry forms. A cassette can be sent directly to Berlin, particularly for the competition, which is programmed by festival director Moritz de Hadeln, and the information section, programmed by Manfred Salgeber.

—Robert Aaronson

*Fest is held in February; deadline: Dec. 10. Shorts, narratives and documentaries in 16 and 35mm are acceptable, and there is some fluidity between sections, so a less avant-garde or shorter film submitted to the Forum may be invited to the more crowded information section. The festival will pay for shipping of selected films, which may be sent en masse from AIVF. They will also pay the transportation and expenses of filmmakers, enabling them to participate in discussions following screenings. Contact: International Filmfestspiele Berlin, Budepester Strasse 50, D-1000 Berlin 30; tel. (030) 26 341; telex: 185 244 fest D; telegram Filmfest Berlin.*

## Pterodactyl Lake: Dance on Camera

Now entering its 14th year, Dance on Camera is the dinosaur of dance film festivals in this country. Though not extinct, it is nevertheless a creature clumsier than one would expect after so many years of dance lessons. The time has come for evolution to a higher life form, if Dance on Camera is to survive in the competitive arts environment. One step in the right direction was the inclusion of video beginning in 1983. Still, the battle for funding is ongoing, and keen rivals like the video-only Dance on the Lower East Side have already surpassed this event.

Dance on Camera is presented by the New York-based Dance Films Association (DFA), a



not-for-profit organization established in 1956 by Susan Braun. She has been the director ever since, and describes DFA's purpose as "a service organization to facilitate booking." This is ostensibly achieved through sales of a catalogue listing distributors and sales/rental information for dance films. The cover price of \$10.00 was reduced to \$5.95 last year due to the dated nature of the contents. The catalogue is advertised by word of mouth and one small ad in *Dance* magazine's annual issue, according to Braun.

Publicity for the festival is handled the same way—i.e., it is almost nonexistent. There is only one mailing of perhaps 100 flyers to cultural institutions with free newsletter and bulletin board listings. Certainly, this accounts for the small number of entries: just nine films and 37 videos last year. (Julie Harrison, curator of Dance on the Lower East Side, says she received some 100 videos for the third event in 1984.) The gold star award certificates look nice when framed, but their value in terms of recognition is questionable, simply because so few people are aware of this event. (Not one of the winning works mentioned here received any feedback—reviews, queries, bookings—as a result of participating in this festival.) Both Anna Kisselgoff, the *New York Times* dance critic, and Marian Horosko, one of PBS' original dance consultants and associate editor of *Dance* magazine, said they had never even heard of Dance on Camera. This is the festival's faux pas; after all, these people are just a local telephone call away.

There is one notably good aspect of the festival, introduced last year—flexible judging. Top-notch judges, many of them members of the DFA's board of directors, are selected *after* the entries are in, based on their knowledge of a particular type of dance or production presented. The policy protects independent productions from direct competition with, say, PBS' *Dance in America* or other high-budget studio productions. Both are valuable in their own right, and are judged accordingly.

Dance on Camera '85 will coincide with National Dance Week in April. Screenings will probably be held on two weekday nights and two weekend afternoons. For the second year, the Donnell Library Media Center will co-sponsor the event. This year, the auditorium was one-third full (about 100 people) for three of the shows, and almost capacity (253) for a fourth, according to Louise Spain of the Media Center.

Winning works in 1984 represented a wide variety of dance genres. Among them was AIVFer Norman Levy's *Future Primitive*, screened on opening night; *Revenge of Two Songs*, performed by Minoru Miyagi and the

Okinawa Kabudan and produced by Beate Gordon of the Asia Society; Richard Baker and Bill Boggs' documentary on the Stuttgart Ballet; an Oberlin Dance Collective "booking tape"; and two experimental films—*Building Streams*, performed by Trin Tierney and directed by Tierney with Karen Hatch, and *Handcraft* by Gail Banker.

Dance on Camera should not be allowed to just stagger off into a swamp, waiting for fossilization to set in. The Dance Films Association has a fine board of directors, with the ability to direct the evolution of Dance on Camera into a healthy, living creature. It would be interesting for the festival to include a seminar or lecture series led by dance critics or the film and videomakers themselves. And the festival's outreach certainly needs improvement. The market for this important art form is there—it just needs to be cultivated in the proper way.

—Deborah Erickson

Entry deadline is Jan. 15; fees as follows: under 5 minutes, \$10; 5 to 11, \$35; 12-25, \$20.00; 26-49, \$25.00; 50-90, \$30.00; over 90 minutes, \$35.00. (DFA members receive 20% discount.) Contact: Susan Braun, Dance Films Association, Inc., 241 E. 34th St., Rm 801, NY NY 10016; tel. (212) 686-7019. ■

## IN BRIEF

This month's festivals have been compiled by Robert Aaronson and Deborah Erickson. Listings do not constitute an endorsement, and since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

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## Domestic

● **MIAMI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, February 1-10. At last year's mostly-major event, there were turn-away crowds at several theaters, and sell-outs for almost every showing. Subtitled "For the Love of Film," the festival is organized by film professor Stephen Bowles and Miami art house entrepreneur Nat Chediak. (The budget: a whopping \$250,000, \$20,000 of which was seed money from Florida cultural foundations.) Screenings were held at Chediak's 169-seat Cinematheque, the 190-seat Arcadia cinema, and the university's Beaumont Cinema. Although almost all the films shown here were studio productions (Louis Malle's *Crackers* was the only U.S. rep), co-director Bowles expressed an interest in increased independent participation this year. He concedes it's difficult to show experimental work in Miami, and that his primary objective is finding films with audience appeal (generally narrative, though he'll look at anything). Some independents were included last year: Bette Gordon's *Variety* was screened for "an enthusiastic, right wing audience," she recalled. "The festival was great. They paid for everything—flight, hotel, limos. Everybody was extremely hospitable. It was a good chance to meet people [Victor Nunez, John Sayles and Luke Berroult were there.] There were lots of good parties. It was a very upscale event, very well organized." Two seminars were presented in 1984: "Cinema In Literature" (Susan Sontag and John Sayles spoke) and "The Nature of Film Financing." There was also a Florida Filmmaker's Forum, specifically for independent Floridians, where Carter Lord's mythological feature about the Everglades, *The Enchanted*, was shown. But the Forum cannot be presented this year—a moratorium on independent film funding in the state has effectively halted all production. The festival will be looking for other independent work to fill this gap. Entry deadline: November 30. No entry fee, but filmmaker pays round-trip postage. Contact: Stephen Bowles, Department of Communication, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL 33124; (305) 666-1613.

● **THE INTERNATIONAL TOURNEE OF ANIMATION**, Spring, 1985. "Everyone in the world knows about the Tournee," claims its director, Prescott Wright. In a recent phone conversation, Wright said, "It's totally unnecessary to discuss any of the previous winners just to impress your members. These people are professionals." Seems Wright still has trouble with "the galloping naivete of many independent filmmakers and several 'cultural' institutions—sometimes even A1VF," to quote his response to last year's query. The Tournee's 18th event was held in 1983, and included a tribute to pinscreen animation pioneers Claire Parker and Alexandre Alexieff, with a screening of their 1933 landmark film *A Night on Bald Mountain*. Wright said, "I guess you could call Alexieff an independent. He died poor." Well, does the Tournee accept current independent works? "We will look at them. We might even include one or two if there are any good ones. Some years there just aren't any quality independent works." The Tournee distributes a package of 15-20 shorts, with a total running time of 100-120 minutes, to over 100 colleges, museums and theaters in the U.S. and Canada. Animators receive 50% of net profits earned during the 2½ year tour, for which you must grant exclusive package rights. Shorts produced in the last two years in 16 and 35mm are accepted for screening; deadline: Nov. 30. ¼" cassette OK. No entry fee. Contact:

Prescott J. Wright, FilmWright, 4530 18th St., San Francisco, CA 94114; tel. (415) 863-6100.

● **JVC PROFESSIONAL VIDEO COMPETITION**, March. Now in its fifth year, the event is open to any U.S. business, educational, scientific, government or community organization that produces video in-house. There are four categories: Communications, Training, Promotion/Merchandising and Local Cable Production. Students may enter tapes as future professionals, and will be judged separately. Top prizes last year went to Minolta, General Foods, Geophysical Service, Inc., and the Women's Video Collective. The Collective's tape, *Stronger Than Before*, documented a protest against nuclear deployment, staged by thousands of women during the summer of 1983 in Seneca, New York. Awards for this competition are quite generous, and attract a large number of entries. First place winners choose JVC professional video equipment worth \$5,000; 2nd place chooses \$3,000 worth; 3rd place selects \$1,500 worth. Student winners will receive tuition scholarships valued at \$2,000, \$1,000 and \$500. Deadline is Nov. 30. No entry fee. For rules and entry forms contact: Caren Tauber or Timothy Volk, 1984 Professional Video Competition, c/o Shaw & Todd, Inc., 6101 Empire State Bldg. NY, NY 10118; tel. (212) 244-5225.

● **SANTA FE FILM EXPOSITION**, March. Presents independent 16mm films for local audiences of 100 each Friday and Saturday night of the month. Selected works of all lengths and genres will be screened at the new Center for Contemporary Arts Theatre. The fourth non-competitive event receives Albuquerque and Santa Fe press; pays rental fee based on running time (probably \$2.00 per minute.) Among some 30 films selected last year were *The Passing* by John Huckert, *Born to Film* by Danny Lyon, and Jane Aaron's 7-minute *Remains To Be Seen*. Selection panel member Linda Klosky said the exposition "tends to look for narratives with innovative style," but several shorts were also selected. Other panelists for 1985 are Willard Van Dyke and Bob Gaylor. Entry fee of \$7 covers return postage. Deadline: Dec. 10. Contact: Linda Klosky, Center for Contemporary Art, 1050 Old Pecos Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87501; tel. (505) 982-1338.

## Foreign

● **BELGRADE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, February. Available information on this festival is sketchy. Peter Rose entered his film *The Man Who Could Not See Far Enough* last year; it was screened, but he has not heard anything further, and has not received his print yet. This is a non-competitive event for features of any gauge; humanistic and progressive works are favored. Entries must be accompanied by synopsis, stills, script and subtitle list. Categories have traditionally included best world films, best of year's productions from developing cinematographers, film parade for children, confrontation (recent trends), new Yugoslavian films. Entry fee unknown. Fest insures all prints. Deadline: December. Contact: Donka Spick, Editor-in-Chief, Sava Center, Milentija Popovica 9, New Belgrade 11070, Yugoslavia; tel. 609-463, telex 11811.

● **CINEMA DU REEL**, March 9-17. Spring in Paris: sidewalk cafes, promenades down the Champs-Élysées, student mobilizations, and the return of

ethnographic filmmakers to the Centre Georges Pompidou. Over 100 documentaries in 16 and 35mm and ¾" video from more than 30 countries were screened in 1984 at the sixth annual Festival of Visual Anthropology and Social Documentation, organized by the Bibliotheque Publique d'Information. Films shown in competition from the U.S. were *Silver Valley* by Michele Negroponte, Peggy Stern and Mark Erder, which won the 15,000 FF grand prize; and Bill Jersey's *Children of Violence*. Nine other works were screened, ranging in length from five to 120 minutes. All originated in 16mm except for the 28-minute videotape *Theater in Prison* by Sylvie Thourard and Catherine Ruello. Other subjects included Tibetan Buddhism, breakdancing, portraits of individuals, Agent Orange, the history of communism in the U.S., and Neiman-Marcus. The selection committee goes for variety, but, as Bill Sloane of the circulating film library at the Museum of Modern Art stated, "The festival is run by librarians, not film people." Their orientation is more toward the "history of anthropology" than the "history of documentary." He added, "They are most interested in films with an ethnographic bent—social and political films, not soft cultural documentaries." But he said that because the festival is government-sponsored, its political atmosphere tends to be muted, and a "rabid" documentary would probably not be accepted.

While not excessively commercial, Cinema du Reel is highly regarded among documentarians, along the lines of the Margaret Mead Film Festival in New York. A selection of the works are taken to Cannes in a Cinema du Reel package, and *Silver Valley* was subsequently invited to Edinburgh, Florence and Munich as well as being bought by Catherine Lamour of the new French TV channel Canal Plus. Although English is the common language among the filmmakers, you will be at a tremendous disadvantage at festival events if you don't speak French. (Negroponte recounted one heated discussion between filmmakers and French TV in which the speaker from Entenne 2 was booed—shades of PBS.)

Bill Jersey's documentary *Children of Violence*, screened at Cinema du Reel.



Photo: Stevens Beadle

The festival does not pay transportation for filmmakers, but it may pick up some expenses if you decide to go. For pre-selection purposes, expenses must be borne by the film or videomaker, so the selection committee urges that cassettes be sent directly by post to the festival offices. The deadline for applications (obtainable at A1VF) is December 15, and work must be sent by January 6. Once the selection has been made in France, the Festival Bureau at A1VF will be sending a group shipment at the expense of Cinema du Reel. For more information, contact: Marie-Christine Navacelle, Bibliotheque Publique d'Information, Cinema du Reel, Centre Georges Pompidou, 75191 Paris Cedex 04; tel. 277-12-33; Poste 44-23/45-16; telex 212726F.



# IN AND OUT OF PRODUCTION

## MARY GUZZY

Although this column is not conceived as a forum, it is fitting that the films and tapes submitted for this November issue address the themes of cultural diversity, human rights, and the quality of life—a triad of fundamental issues that will be profoundly affected in the coming years by the paths we choose to pursue as a nation and as individuals working in cultural media.

## PLEAS FOR PEACE/IMAGES OF WAR

Nowhere, perhaps, is there more interest in these choices than in the Soviet Union, where producer Dimitri Devyatkin recently taped 53 minutes of candid-on-the-street interviews with Soviet citizens in six Russian cities. *Video from Russia: The People Speak* portrays a wide range of people from farm workers to students, and poignantly conveys the universal fear of war and an equally fervent desire for peace among average Russians.

Devyatkin, an American who studied filmmaking in Moscow in the now-nostalgic days of Nixonian detente, travelled with cameraperson Eddie Becker and an American peace tour, taping without either official permission or censorship from the Soviet government. Though police were often suspicious and many people in the tape appear surprised by and fearful of Devyatkin's activities, he was never prevented from filming interviews nor asked to surrender any tape to officials. *Video from Russia* is Devyatkin's seventh documentary about the USSR, and has been broadcast by KABC in Los Angeles and WABC in New York.

Award-winning war correspondent-turned-indie producer Don North has released *Guazapa*, a 37-minute 16mm color film documenting a two-month period North spent with the Revolutionary Party of workers and Peasants (PRTC) in a Salvadoran rebel zone 20 miles from San Salvador. The film contains interviews with rank-and-file guerrillas of Guazapa, scenes from a guerrilla attack and a government counter-attack, the exodus of civilians from the zone into the jungle where they hide for weeks from army helicopters, and their return to destroyed homes and crops and murdered friends left in shallow graves by the Salvadoran government army.

Though a veteran journalist for ABC,

NBC, CBS and *Newsweek*, North could muster no financing for the project, and paid for *Guazapa* with a bank loan. In two months of hair-raising production, North shot 6,000 feet of film that had to be buried and later smuggled out of El Salvador. Original music composed by rebels is performed on the film's soundtrack by two Salvadoran exiles living in the U.S. and guitarist Aquiles Magana. After its June premiere in Washington DC, *Guazapa* was awarded the gold medal for best documentary at the Philadelphia International Festival, and was presented at the Montreal Film Festival in August. North is currently raising funds for another film to be made in El Salvador and for a Spanish-language version of *Guazapa*.

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Alexis Krasilovsky's latest film, *Exile*, offers both a personal and historical perspective on intolerance. Tracing the roots of her family over 200 years to the small town of Nikolsburg, Czechoslovakia (now called Mikulov), Krasilovsky's 28-minute film returns to the place where generations of persecution for her Jewish ancestors began. In Prague, in Vienna where some Jews still hide their heritage behind a Protestant facade, in Dachau where Krasilovsky's pianist uncle's hands were frozen, and in New York where she grew up, the filmmaker explores a history of exile, fear, hiding and imprisonment and brings to life a rich world of art and learning shattered by the Holocaust. *Exile* is distributed by Arthur Cantor, Inc. of New York.

Producer Daniel Sipe and directors Carma Hinton and Richard Gordon of Long Bow Group, Inc. in Philadelphia completed *Small Happiness: Women of a Chinese Village* in September. The 58-minute 16mm film is the first in a series the group is producing about China, and focuses on an invisible population: the 400 million women of rural China and their struggle to cope with a changing society in the face of centuries-old traditions.

The film's title, *Small Happiness*, refers to a persistent attitude toward children in rural China: a baby boy brings "great happiness" to a family, while a baby girl is "not exactly no happiness, but a small happiness." In the film's unprecedented interviews, Chinese women speak frankly about their lives: love, marriage, childbearing, birth control, work and family relationships, the notion of foot-binding and infanticide. *Small Happiness*



Courtesy filmmakers

Producer Don North interviews "Arturo," a guerilla squad leader in *Guazapa*.



Emil Wollner emigrated to America in search of freedom, only to return to Europe disenchanted by Alexis Krasilovsky

opened the 1984 Margaret Mead Film Festival in New York.

Producers Ricardo Correa, Maria Paz Marambio-Correa and cameraperson David Leitner have returned from northern Chile where they completed principal shooting of a 16mm documentary entitled *La Tirana del Tamarugal: The Many Faces of a Religious Celebration*. The film explores an unusual week-long multi-cultural celebration which takes place in the town La Tirana, located in the Atacama Desert, the driest in the world. Each year thousands of Latin Americans make a pilgrimage to this barren locale to pay homage to Our Lady of Carmel, a madonna in the local church said to bear a strong resemblance to an Incan High Priestess who was converted to Christianity by a Portuguese explorer. Over 100 dance





Courtesy filmmaker

A scene from Richard Gordon and Carma Hinton's new film, *Small Happiness: Women of a Chinese Village*.

groups, or *cofradias*, perform continuously in elaborate costumes which they design and build. According to David Leitner, many of these costumes were influenced by early American films of the 1920s, when the nearby port of Iquique acquired the first movie projector in South America.

The interrelation of myth and ritual, the importance of religion in the daily lives of Latin Americans and the synchronism of different cultures toward common goals of peace and prosperity are major themes explored by *La Tirana del Tamrugal*. The film will be 58 minutes.

#### AMERICAN VALUES

Three recently-completed films portray the concerns of many Americans working for a

society which more accurately reflects the lives of all citizens. *The Work I've Done*, by Kenneth Fink of Blue Ridge Mountain Films, is a 56-minute exploration of the adjustments and rewards of retirement. The film follows senior citizens as they leave their long-time positions in the labor force and tackle the task of *not* working. Some fear that retirement is the end of life; for others, it is the beginning of a new one.

*The Work I've Done* won a 1984 American Film Festival Red Ribbon, and was screened at the Los Angeles International Film Festival and Festival dei Popoli in Florence, as well as nationally on PBS in September. Fink is also the producer of the labor film *Between Rock and a Hard Place*.

*The Times of Harvey Milk*, Robert Epstein and Richard Schmiechen's feature

documentary on the life and death of San Francisco gay activist Harvey Milk and the bizarre trial of Milk's assassin Dan White, was seen at the New York Film Festival this fall and is now in theatrical release in several cities including New York, San Francisco, Houston, Washington, Seattle, Boston and Chicago. The film was picked up by Teleculture of New York for distribution at its world premiere at the Telluride Festival in September.

Epstein and Schmiechen sent over 200 proposals and letters of inquiry while fundraising for this project, which ultimately cost \$289,000. Though substantial monies were provided by New York's WNET TV Lab, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Playboy Foundation, Pioneer Fund and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, among others, over 800 individuals also contributed funding for the film. The project is an example not only of exhaustive and meticulous documentary production, but of a well-organized and continuous fundraising and promotional effort on the part of producers from the earliest preproduction stage to the final release print.

Finally, David Shulman's hour-long video *Race Against Prime Time* was completed in July and is being screened by grassroots media watch groups, churches and college organizations. The tape focuses on the 1980 McDuffie case in Miami, in which four white policemen were tried and acquitted for the murder of a black businessman, leading to three days of violent protests in the Miami streets. *Race Against Prime Time* is a case study of network and local media coverage of a sensational news event, but the piece goes beyond a single event to analyze the way news is made. By including archival news broadcasts from other racial conflicts of a decade ago, the tape places the treatment of the McDuffie case in a historical context. Shulman went behind the scenes of a local TV station, following an assignment editor on his daily routine to explore the decision-making process which determines what becomes news and how it is presented. The tape also delves into the daily life of the community, profiling employment, health and other factors to provide a balanced view of the area when it is not the center of sensational news. *Race Against Prime Time* was four years in the making and was partially funded by the Board of Global Ministries/Women's Division on Racial Justice, Downtown Community TV and the New York State Council on the Arts.



# NOTICES

Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others included as space permits. Send Notices to: Mary Guzzy, *THE INDEPENDENT*, c/o FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012. For further information, call: (212) 473-3400. Deadline: 8th of second preceding month (e.g., November 8 for January/February issue). Edited by Mary Guzzy.

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● **FOR RENT:** Nagra III, crystal sync, adapted for 7½" reels, case, AC adaptor. Excellent condition. Reservation & deposit required. Contact: Theresa Weedy, (212) 447-3280, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Broadcast ENG gear w/ Ikegami HL83, Sony BVU 110 w/time code, lights, mikes, Sachtler tripod. International crew for local rates. Contact: Lisa, Metro Video, (212) 267-8221, 608-6005, NY.

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● **FOR RENT:** Ikegami HL-79A, BVU 110, lights, mikes, insurance. \$450/day. Radio mikes, car, sunglasses, crew additional as required. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

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● **WINDY CITY WORKSHOPS** at Center for New Television. November & December courses including Editing Theory, Videotape Editing 1 & 2, Digital Video: TBC & Digital Effects, Lighting for Video, Computer Graphics w/ Apple II Computer, On-Line/Off-Line Editing, Video Study Series: Documentary & Advanced Zgrass Programming. Classes are held evenings & weekends. Detailed brochure available. Contact: Jeanine Mellinger, CNTV, 11 E. Hubbard St., Chicago IL 60611, (312) 565-1787.

● **ARTS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP SERIES** offered by Arts Extension Service of University of Massachusetts/Amherst. Introduction to Arts Management, Nov. 1, 8 & 15, noon-10pm in Boston. Introduction to Grantwriting & Basics of Arts Advocacy, Nov. 9 in Boston. Marketing the Arts: Developing Art Product Strategies & Managing Direct Mail & Telemarketing, Nov. 30 in Amherst. Contact: Craig Dreeszen, AES, Div. of Continuing Education, U. Mass/Amherst, Amherst MA 01003, (413) 545-2360.

● **COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA WINTER WORKSHOPS:** Beginning Film II, Tues. & Thurs. Nov. 6-Dec. 2, 7-10:30 pm, \$160. Basic principles of film lighting, Sat. & Sun. Nov. 3 & 4, noon-6 pm, & Sat. Nov. 10, noon-6 pm, \$90. Optical Printing, Sat. Nov. 17, 10 am-6 pm, & Tues. Nov. 20, 7-10 pm, \$90. Editing Techniques, Sat. & Sun. Dec. 1 & 2, 10 am-6 pm, \$90. 10% discount to Collective members,

discounts for enrolling in 3 or more weekend workshops. Contact: CLC, 52 White St., NY NY, 10013 (212) 925-3926.

● **INPUT85:** International Public TV Screening Conference at CMCI in Marseilles, France. April 14-20, 1985. Annual forum for exchange of program ideas among producers, programmers & others interested in quality public television. Not a festival or market, INPUT seeks to open international communication on improving art & craft of work on public airwaves & understanding impact of TV programming on all people. Information on conference registration available. Contact: INPUT Office, Elizabeth Neylon, Sylvie Cazin, Michel Anthonioz, INA, Tour Gamma A, 193 rue de Bercy, 75582 Paris Cedex 12, France, tel. 33-1, 347.63.85.

● **VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS CONGRESS/WEST:** Nov. 6-8, 1984 at Los Angeles Convention Center. Over 40 workshops & seminars on computer graphics, corporate communications, video production & postproduction, & latest in emerging technologies designed for video professionals. Contact: VCC-Conference Headquarters, 2378 South Broadway, Denver CO 80210, (800) 525-9710.

● **DAY-LONG WORKSHOPS** at high tech video & audio facilities in NYC. P.A.S.S., Sound Shop, Reeves Teletape, Downtown Community TV offer instruction in preparation of audio & video elements for 1" & interformat postproduction, including time code digital video effects & audio mixing. Contact: The Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 West 58th St., NY NY 10019, (212) 664-7083.

## Editing Facilities

● **MACHINE LANGUAGE:** ¾" editing suite w/ SMPTE time code, \$25/hr. w/ editor. Staff editors offer expertise in new narratives & documentations of music video, dance & art. Production pkg. for location shoots available. "We'll do it all for you from start to finish." Contact: Machine Language, 5 Crosby St., NY NY 10012, (212) 431-7731.

● **EDITING ROOM FOR RENT:** 8-plate Steenbeck. 2 rooms fully equipped w/ everything including sound transfer. 24-hr. access, convenient downtown location. \$900/mo., \$250/wk., \$60/day; negotiable. Call: Anomaly Films, (212) 925-1500, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** 6-plate Steenbeck editing room. Fully equipped including telephone. Special rates for independents. Contact: Bob Mack Prods., (212) 736-3074, NY.

● **OFF LINE ON COST EDITING:** New high-speed equip. Fully computerized edit decision, list management w/ printout. Rough cuts, clip reels, window dubs, time coding available. Quiet cool editing room; everything \$20/hr. Contact: Bob Wiegand, (212) 925-6059, NY.

● **EDITING POST** offers ¾" editing at \$50/hr. w/ editor. System includes JVC CR-8250 recorder w/ vertical interval head switching & balanced audio inputs (broadcast standards), Chyron VP-1 graphics, time base correction & full time code capability, including window dubs. Discounts for longer projects. Convenient midtown NY location; 24-hr., 7-day access. Book time M-F, 10am-6pm. Contact: Gerry Pallor, (212) 757-4220, NY.



● **SONY BVU 3/4" EDITING:** \$25/hr. w/ Editor. Call: (212) 242-2320, NY.

● **VIDEO EDITING & TIME CODING:** 3/4" hi-speed video editing on new JVC 8250 w/ convergence control. \$20/\$30 per hour. Low rates for time coding & time code editing. Contact: Inpoint Productions, (212) 679-3172, NY.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

● **CAMPUS NETWORK:** TV network broadcasting exclusively to colleges & universities now accepting 3/4" videos for programming. If accepted, we pay for 1-week exhibition period. Contact: Campus Network, c/o Steve Amateur, 114 5th AV., NY NY 10011, (212) 206-1953.

● **FROM WASTELAND TO WONDERLAND:** Culture Shock, an eclectic TV "almanac," seeks short film & video alternatives to the "Milquetoast of 'sell-a-vision'" for cable broadcast. 10 sec.-10 min. original, outrageous, w/new techniques & new visions; upbeat/offbeat programming in any format. All submissions taken seriously & returned promptly. Fair, competitive, non-exclusive price negotiated for all works chosen. Contact: Tim Radford, Culture Shock, Box 2040, Middleburg VA 22117, (703) 687-6400.

● **WANTED:** Clips of independent work by AIVF members for compilation tape being produced in conjunction with AIVF 10th Anniversary. Submit on 3/4" cassette only; 5 min. maximum. May originate in any format or be from any genre, on any subject. Humor welcome; outtakes OK. All clips will be viewed by committee & edited for time & pacing considerations. Tape will be premiered at 10th Anniversary Celebration in Feb. 1985. Contributors will be listed in commemorative program. Send cassettes plus \$5 return postage & handling. Contact: Andrea/Mary, AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., NY NY 10012, (212) 473-3400.

## Freelancers

● **DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANT/ PRODUCER'S ASSISTANT:** Some experience; would enjoy expanding. Learn fast, easy to work with, some writing capability. Dedicated & free to travel. Call: Desiree Heynacker, (212) 475-6634/242-3900 ext. 215, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** for low-budget features. Contact: Felix Parnell, (212) 759-9216, NY.

● **FILM COMPOSER AVAILABLE:** Experience w/ strong classical background; teaches film composing at Manhattan School of Music & School of Visual Arts. Contact: Ed Green, (212) 533-4303, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** specializing in Hispanic subjects, US or Latin America, available for documentary. Fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Russian; English OK, too. CP GSMO, lights, sound, editing facilities. Based in Santa Fe. Contact: Pacho Lane, PO Box 266, Cerrillos NM 87010, (505) 982-6800.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/ 15 yrs. experience in 35mm & 16mm interested in independent fiction films. Fluent in French. Contact: Babette Mangolte, (212) 925-6329, NY.

## Opportunities • Gigs

● **MEDIA CENTER PROGRAM DIRECTOR:** Global Village, NYC, seeks individual to coordinate & administer programs, fundraising & help develop national documentary center. Responsibilities include fundraising, proposal writing, publicity, public relations, supervision of Artist-in-Residence program, coordination & administration of media programs. Requires commitment to & knowledge of independent media, fundraising experience, written & oral skills, initiative & ability to work independently. Part-time. Salary & hours negotiable. Send resume & writing sample by Nov. 1. Contact: J. Gustafson, Director, Global Village, 454 Broome St., NY NY 10013.

● **MUSIC VIDEO PRODUCERS:** Place your clients' video on New York cable TV. Contact: PO Box 724, C.P. NY 12065.

● **VIDEO PRODUCTION COMPANY** is looking for a few good people w/ experience in all phases of video production & sales to form production company. Must have art as well as real-world money-making background. Send letter & resume. Contact: HaSH Prod., 211 West 56 St., Ste. 35-L, NY NY 10019.

● **WANTED:** Screenplays, books, stories, plays for motion pictures, TV. Professional evaluations by ex-studio story consultants (Orion & Filmways). Qualifying manuscripts offered sales, development deals, referrals to major literary agents. Contact: Flaming Rose Prods., 770 Princeton Av., Metedeconk NJ 08724, (201) 892-5552.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER WANTED:** Small, non-profit social issues film company w/ flatbed & Nagra seeks competent cinematographer w/ equipment interested in 1-yr. partnership in Alaska, beginning April 1985. Must be willing to generate projects as well as become involved in company's other functions. Contact: Affinity Films, PO Box 102974, Anchorage AK 99510.

● **DIRECTOR/EDITOR FOR VIDEO PROGRAMMING** Duties include conceptual development, directing, instructing new employees. Requires creative understanding of videography, lighting & sound, strong background in technical aspects of video, experience operating computerized editing system or willingness to learn, understanding of production costs. Salary open depending on qualifications. Send demo tape w/detailed outline of functions performed on pieces presented, resume w/ current phone number & date of availability. Contact: Penny L. Adkins, Administrative Director, Video International Publishers, 118 Sixth St. South, Great Falls, MT 59405.

## Publications

● **NATIONAL FEDERATION OF LOCAL CABLE PROGRAMMERS** offers publications covering issues & aspects of cable TV industry: *The Cable Broadband Communications Books*, Vol. 1-3, 1977-83. Covers history & development of cable, regulatory agencies, complementary technologies, access & current state of industry. Vol. 1, \$15; vol. 2, \$19; vol. 3, \$21.95, \$18.95 NFLCP members. *Cable Renewals & Refranchising*. An overview of questions & issues surrounding renegotiation of cable franchise agreements. \$21.95,

\$18.95 members. *Cable TV & The Cities*. Compilation of articles exploring local regulation & municipal uses of cable. Addresses franchising, ongoing regulation, privacy, censorship & legal control. \$10. Contact NFLCP, 906 Pennsylvania Av. SE, Washington DC 20003.

● **DIRECTORY OF ARTS ACTIVISM:** National directory of artists & arts organizations dedicated to social change & cultural activism. Edited by Susan R. McCarn. Fully indexed. 160 pp. \$5. Contact: Cultural Correspondence, 505 West End Av., NY NY 10024, (212) 787-1784.

● **GUIDE TO FILMS ON CENTRAL AMERICA:** Describes & evaluates 40 films, tapes & slide shows on El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, & Honduras w/ special section on Grenada. Lists film distributors, low-cost film libraries & speakers' bureaus. Published by Media Network in cooperation w/ North American Congress on Latin America, Film Fund, Funding Exchange/National Community Funds. Contact: Media Network, 208 West 13 St., NY NY 10011, (212) 620-0877.

● **DIRECTORY OF FOUNDATIONS OF THE GREATER WASHINGTON AREA 1984:** Most current facts & figures on 400 grant-making foundations in metropolitan DC area. Includes 5 largest grants awarded by each foundation, names of trustees, directors & managers, indexes & glossary. 90 pp. \$10 plus \$1.50 postage. Contact: Jamie Kopp, Community Foundation of Greater Washington, 3221 M St. NW, Washington DC 20007, (202) 338-8993.

● **IDIOLECTS #14:** Explores relationship between popular culture (media imagery, commercial values, dispersal of an art world elite, popular music) and avant-garde. Includes some discussion of issues relevant to indie filmmakers. \$3.50 + \$1.50 postage/-handling. Contact: Collective for Living Cinema, 52 White St., NY NY 10013.

● **OPIS:** magazine dedicated to experimental & political cinema. Send for info on subscriptions &/or on submitting material for publication. Contact: Tony Reif, OPIS, 1616 W. 3 Ave., Vancouver BC, Canada V6K 1G6, (604) 734-1628.

## Resources • Funds

● **GLOBAL VILLAGE 1984-85 ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCY GRANTS:** Available to artists in NY, NJ & CT. \$250 plus equipment time & production services allows 2-3 video artists to complete videotape projects aimed for broadcast or cablecast. Includes executive producing service, production advice, distribution & promotion services if desired. Application deadline: Nov. 30, 1984. Contact: Renee Tajima, Global Village, 454 Broome St., NY NY 10013, (212) 966-7526.

● **FILM TITLE SERVICES:** Camera-ready art &/or shooting of titles. Many typefaces, design consultation, crawls. Reasonable rates, fast service. Call: (212) 460-8921, NY.

● **NEGATIVE MATCHING:** A & B rolls cut at reasonable rates. Contact: Bruce, (212) 228-7352, NY.

● **LEGAL SERVICES:** Experienced entertainment lawyer specializing in independent productions. Reasonable rates. Contact: Paula Schaap, (212) 227-4530, NY.



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 3/4" TAPE - 10 MIN. \$30 30 MIN. \$45 60 MIN. \$ 75  
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 CHYRON TITLING... 1" AMPEX VTR's  
 A/B ROLLS (3/4, 3/4 to 3/4") with SWITCHER \$125 Hr. CUTS ONLY \$75 Hr.  
 A/B ROLLS (1", 1" to 1") with SWITCHER \$175 Hr. CUTS ONLY \$110 Hr.

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● **MEDIA CONSULTING SERVICE:** Proposal coordination, script consultation, national marketing campaigns. Expert guidance for NEH, CPB, corporate & foundation proposals. Concept suitability, program design & proposal format for film TV & radio projects; program & script development; promotion & advertising for completed films/programs/series. Highly experienced. Demonstrated results. Contact: Barbara Sirota Productions, (212) 777-6011, NY.

● **FILM TITLE SERVICE:** Typeset & prepare artwork, \$100. Shoot, develop & workprint, \$200. Contact: Charlie, (212) 598-9111 or 982-3014, NY.

● **VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP** artist-in-residence program offers producers access to 1/2" & postproduction facilities. Deadlines: Dec. 1, 1984 & March 1, 1985. Submit resume, typewritten project description & sample of previous work w/ self-addressed, stamped mailer. Contact: Bob Doyle, Media Program Coord., VSW, 32 Prince St., Rochester NY 14607.

## Trims • Glitches

● **SHORT NOTICE:** If you've noticed that Notices are noticeably brief, you may also have noticed that we've eliminated some of the long-running ones. Space in *The Independent* is becoming a precious commodity, so some "continuous" ads had to be cut. All AIVF members may resubmit their free notices beginning

with the Jan./Feb. 1985 issue (special deadline: Nov. 15). Continuous notices will be run a maximum of 3 consecutive months before they must be resubmitted. Please state in your copy if the notice should run for 3 months. All notices should be addressed to Mary Guzzly at AIVF.

● **AFI/SONY NATIONAL VIDEO FESTIVAL STUDENT WINNERS:** National winners are Laura Davis, Syracuse Univ., producer of experimental tape *You Never Left*; Stephen Roszell of Chicago's Columbia College for the non-fiction *Writing in Water*; and from the U. of Texas/Arlington, Steven Jay Hoey for *Hotline*. Regional winners are Barry Strongin, MIT; Kristen G. Hudgik, RI School of Design; Thomas Naughton, NYU; Joseph P. John, NYU; Annie Goldson, Tisch School of the Arts (NYU); Eric Scholl, Northwestern.; Arielle Thomas, U. of Kansas; Stephen Evans, John V. Sargeant & Tenzing Sonam, U. of Cal./Berkeley; Barney W. Haynes, Cal. College of Arts & Crafts; Douglas Rosenberg, San Francisco Art Inst.; Andrew Biken, U. of Texas/Austin; and David Stout, Cal. Inst. of Arts. National and regional winners will receive Sony video production equipment, and schools of national winners will also receive Sony prizes.

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to AIVF member Isaac Jackson for an award from the New York State Council on the Arts to produce an audio art series entitled *Fashion Moda Radio*.

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to AIVF member Janet Benn for a \$1000 Media Fellowship grant from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Benn will produce an animated film on the Irish mythological heroine, *The Morrigan*.

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to new *Independent* editor Martha Gever for her recent award from the National Endowment for the Arts: the Fellowship for Critical Writing. This is the last year of this category.

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to Nadine Covert, former executive director of the Educational Film Library Association, on her appointment as special consultant, Critical Inventory at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC. The project is part of the two-part Program for Art on Film, a joint venture between the Metropolitan & the J. Paul Getty Trust (see "Trims/Glitches," June 1984).

● **1984 NEA FILM VIDEO PRODUCTION GRANTS:** The National Endowment for the Arts awarded 34 grants totalling \$799,000 & ranging in size from \$10,000 - \$50,000 to independent film & video producers. Film production grants totalled \$535,000 & video grants came to \$264,000. Video award winners are, by region: Marlon Riggs, Ilene Segalove, Skip Sweeney of CA; Skip Blumberg, Juan Downey, Kit Fitzgerald, Vito Acconci, Dara Birnbaum, Daniel Reeves, John Sturgeon, & the team of Constance de Jong, Tony Oursler, & Babette Mangolte of NY. Film grantees are: Bruce Conner, Elfriede Fischinger, Wayne Wang of CA; Lee Sokol of GA; David & Beverly Parry of NH; Jane Aaron, Peter Chow & Calvin Wong, Jaime Barrios, Lizzie Borden, Ayoka Chenzira, Ana Maria Garcia, Patricia Foulkrod & Stefan Moore, Theodore R. Life, Jill Godmilow, Jane Morrison, James Benning, Mira Nair, Donn Pennebaker & Chris Hegedus, Mark Rappaport of NY; Anthony Buba of PA; Lucy Massie Phenix & Veronica Selver of TN & Danny Lyon & Glen Pitre of TX. Details of projects and award amounts are available from the NEA Media Arts Program.

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Prices and scheduling: Joe Scozzari  
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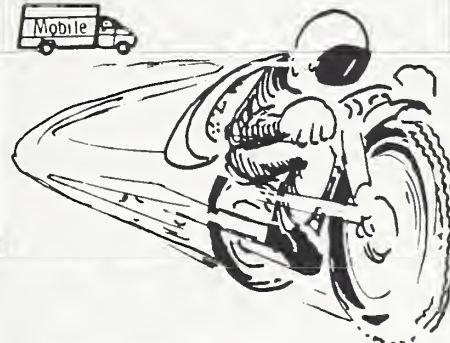
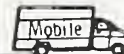
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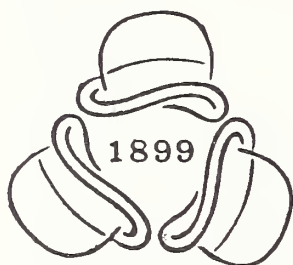
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## MEMORANDA

With this issue, *The Independent* welcomes Michael Barnes, our new art director. A graduate of Pratt Institute, Michael is the communications director and director of photography for Triad International Corporate Communications, and has directed and produced several commercials and six independent films.

Our previous art director, Deborah Payne, has left *The Independent* to pursue her design career. Hired in 1982, Deborah contributed to the magazine's stylistic development.

We wish good luck to both of them.

### AIVF thanks . . .

Bertrand R. Devort, New York, NY  
Marian Ferrara, New York, NY  
for their contributions.

### Call for Clips

AIVF is producing a compilation tape of clips from independently produced films and videotapes which will premiere at our 10th anniversary celebration in February '85 (watch future issues of *The Independent* for more information on the festivities). Contributors to the tape will be listed in a commemorative program.

If you are interested in having your work included, please send a five-minute clip (no longer) on ¾" tape to Compilation Tape, AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012. All submissions must be accompanied by a \$5.00 handling fee. Deadline: December 1, 1984. A committee will further edit the clips based on time constraints. If you have any questions, call Andrea or Mary at AIVF, (212) 473-3400.

### Children of War Tour Seeks Videomaker

Organized by the Religious Task Force of the Mobilization for Survival, the Children of War Tour will bring together 33 young people from Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Central America, the Marshall Islands, East & West Germany, the Soviet Union and the United States. They will tour 36 cities in six groups sharing their personal experience of war and their fear of the nuclear threat with student and community groups.

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# THE INDEPENDENT

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**Cover:** Robert Flaherty had no formal training as an anthropologist, but his film *Nanook of the North* remains the best-known ethnographic movie ever made. In "Ethnocentric Circles: A Short History of Ethnographic Film," Claudia Springer traces the influence of Flaherty and others on changing values and styles in ethnographic filmmaking. Photo: Museum of Modern Art.



## COMPROMISE OR COMPROMISED? CONGRESS PASSES CABLE BILL

As Congress moved toward adjournment in October, it appeared that the 98th session would come and go without enactment of national cable legislation. The latest compromise between the National Cable Television Association (NCTA), the National League of Cities (NLC) and the United States Conference of Mayors was stalled due to conservative Senate opposition to the House bill's equal employment opportunity provision. Then, just hours before the last gavel fell, the provision's supporters yielded and the Cable Telecommunications Act of 1984 passed.

Passage ended four years of lobbying battles and unstable compromises between the industry and local authorities over the issue of regulatory power. Since 1980, when the first cable bill was introduced, the industry has changed from a potential financial and creative bonanza, rich with high-tech hopes and investment dollars, to a tightly managed and often troubled business, hedging its bets with predictable programming. The legislative struggle reflected cable's fluctuating fortunes in the market and in the courts.

Last year, the NCTA thought it was close to victory on the legislation when the Senate passed S.66, based on the NCTA's compromise with the NLC—only to have NLC membership balk at what many considered a sell-out. The fight moved to the House, where local authorities regained ground in the drafting of companion bill HR 4103. A compromise version was hammered out, but foundered in the wake of a Supreme Court decision declaring that Federal Communications Commission rules pre-empt local regulations. Much to the cable industry's delight, the FCC acted quickly on its court-tested power, overruling local regulations in Nevada and Miami. Now it was the NCTA's turn to balk; it wondered if it had given too much away, while the local authorities suddenly became eager for passage. More negotiations resulted in yet another compromise, which in turn got stuck on the EEO issue. The eleventh-hour legislative resolution surprised even House bill sponsor Timothy Wirth (D-CO).

Most observers of the media were quick to label the Cable Telecommunications Act a victory for the industry, which won some big bottom line-related concessions, including deregulation of basic cable rates after two years, protection against "unfair denial" of franchise renewal, and the exclusive right to set rates for leased channels. The cities, in turn, comforted themselves with the knowledge that they now had some legislative protection from the free market fervor of Mark Fowler's FCC.

The legislation contains both bad news and consolations for local cable programmers and public interest groups:

Franchise authorities can establish requirements for the designation and use of public, educational, and government access channels. But operators can obtain "modification" of these requirements if the franchise authority or the court finds them "commercially impractical."

Systems of 36 or more channels are required to set aside a graduated percentage of channels for lease by "parties unaffiliated with the cable company." But because the operator alone sets the rate for these channels, there is a real threat that program suppliers with limited resources will be priced out of the market.

In the push to get the bill through, the EEO provision's teeth were removed by the elimination of specific numerical hiring requirements. However, companies are required to establish some kind of EEO program, subject to FCC review.

Finally, the public's right to directly intervene in the franchising process did not survive the last-minute power brokering. The bill only gives the public the right to "comment" on the franchising procedure. And franchises can be renewed without a public hearing, if the franchise authority and the incumbent operator agree to do so.

—Debra Goldman

## ANOTHER ONE FOR THE GIPPER

During the past four years, the Reagan Administration has appointed its ideologues to every federal entity, from the Supreme Court to the Environmental Protection Agency to the National Endowments. Now, only weeks before the election, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has joined the ranks of Republican-controlled agencies, with the election of Sonia Landau as CPB board chair. Landau, head of the Women for Reagan-Bush Committee, replaces Democrat Sharon Percy Rockefeller, who held the chair for three years.

According to Landau's CPB-circulated resume, her career extends far back into Republican politics. She served on the Reagan transition team for the National Endowment for the Arts, was the executive director of the New York State Republican Finance Committee, the director of radio and television at the National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, and a former candidate for Congress. Landau is the



wife of *New York Times* reporter and television critic John Corry.

Landau was elected at the September 21 annual meeting by the 10-member board, seven of whom are Reagan appointees. This event has some other public broadcasting entities anxiously anticipating the future course of the Corporation. With the spectre of the upcoming election, the newly constituted board has already discussed two unusual and potentially significant new measures. According to *Current*, a public television newspaper, the board departed from the custom of voting on corporate officers at the annual meeting, deferring election until January. The move has raised speculation over the future of president Edward Pfister's job at CPB.

The board also considered setting aside portions of the supplemental national production monies (\$266,000 of \$1.26 million in FY 1984, and \$1.39 million of \$3.45 million in FY 1985). The proposal for the set-aside came from Pfister, who suggested adult literacy, the completion of *Reading Rainbow*, and math programming as possible beneficiaries. According to Stan Harrison, director of corporate communications at CPB, the board will decide on the set-aside at its November meeting. If approved, the set-aside will undoubtedly raise questions regarding future programming decisions, for these funds may be used at the discretion of the board, bypassing the Program Fund's review process. Can the allocation of program monies be sufficiently insulated from political interference, given this scenario?

As one observer pointed out, it seems that more drama is percolating behind the PTV scenes than on the air.

—Renee Tajima



## AT LEAST ACCESS

The relationship between "video art" and "television" remains an open question in the none-too-abundant discourse of video criticism. Does the television medium have room for an art form which seeks, in part, to subvert TV's conventions? Even as the theorists debate the issue, many of the artists themselves answer "yes": the trick, they say, is figuring out how to package it, deliver it, promote it, and pay for it. In New York, a group of veteran videomakers—Ira Schneider, Maxi Cohen, Dena Crane, Bart Friedman, and Nancy Cain—have come up with a formula of their own, under the umbrella of the Raindance Foundation. The result is the video art cable show *Night Light TV*, a long-cherished idea which hopes its time has finally come.

In the late sixties, many of these same pioneers waxed enthusiastic over video technology's power to transform the globe. These days the universe has shrunk to Time Inc.-owned Manhattan Cable, where New Yorkers can view *Night Light TV* every Friday at 9:30 p.m. on leased access Channel J. Unlike the Learning Channel's million-dollar satellite-delivered series *Dis/patches* and *Agenda*, which create elaborate contexts for the selected films and tapes, *Night Light TV* is for those who like their video art straight. Only the intermittent appearance of a glowing program logo and a smooth-voiced female announcer advising viewers of what they are watching stand between audience and art.

Thus far, *Night Light* is a kind of Mom-and-Pop television show: a considerable portion of its programming is made by the program's own producers and their long-time comrades from the video scene. Economics as well as friendship have guided these programming choices. Initially no one was paid for the use of his or her material. "Friends just gave us their tapes and said, 'Go ahead and use them,'" explained Schneider. "They support the concept and want to see it succeed." Now the project has a \$6500 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts, and the show is paying a (very) few dollars per minute. A considerable portion of the NYSCA grant goes toward buying time on the cable system, at a cost of \$100 per hour.

Given the small circle of producers from which the programming is drawn, the show contains a relatively eclectic selection of material. Pieces range from straight documentary to Dan Boord's pseudo-documentary *The Last Days of Immanuel Kant*; from Chip Lord's copy of a 1956 Edsel commercial to performance artist Linda Montano's series of tapes featuring Sister Jacques Bernadette discoursing on the seven *chakras*. Other city video artists who have tuned into the show have begun sending tapes, some of which will be appearing in upcoming months.

Acquiring programming is clearly not a problem for *Night Light TV*. Rather, the future of

the show lies in the empty spaces between the art, which are now filled with invitations to advertisers to buy 30-second spots. Without ads, Raindance has enough money to support the series only through next July. Early shows in the series sported two advertisers—Technisphere, a video production house, and the movie *Wild Style* (the latter arranged by Maxi Cohen, who works with the film's distributor, First Run Features). More recently, however, the invitations have received no response. "We'd like to get a national sponsor," Schneider said. With that kind of support, Raindance could afford to expand its carriage to include Manhattan's up-town Group W system as well as three cable systems in Los Angeles. It would also mean a boost in artists' fees; the immediate goal is to pay \$10 per minute.

Raindance's strategy to lure a national advertiser remains unclear. Schneider made some exploratory visits to advertising agencies, but the problem there was not so much video art as cable itself. "They don't trust cable," Schneider said. "It doesn't have any numbers, any way of knowing how many people are watching. And that's what the agencies want." He is now in the process of knocking on corporate doors. If he cannot convince corporations that sponsoring a show on video art is in their economic self-interest, he will try to sell it as altruistic "support for the arts."

—DG

## YOUNG FILMMAKERS ON BROADWAY

Nineteen eight-five will be a very new year for the 16-year-old Manhattan video resource center, Young Filmmakers/Video Arts. The center will begin the year with a new charter membership. It is changing its official name from Young Filmmakers, Inc. to the no-nonsense Film/Video Arts, Inc. And it will have a new address: at year's end, YF/VA will exchange its old Bowery Mission neighbor for the park-like grounds of Grace Episcopal Church when the center moves to Broadway and 12th Street. Only the phone number will remain the same.

The search for a new space began last spring when YF's landlord informed the staff that the building was up for sale. Although they were offered an option to buy, executive director Rodger Larson said, "After reflection, we decided that this was not the right place or the right space." The "place" was the western edge of the changing Lower East Side, where neighborhood down-and-outers lounge against buildings plastered with announcements of defunct rock bands' playdates. The "space" was a crazy quilt of technical facilities inconveniently scattered across three floors. When the ground floor studio was in use, videomakers in the basement rough edit suite routinely hiked up two flights of



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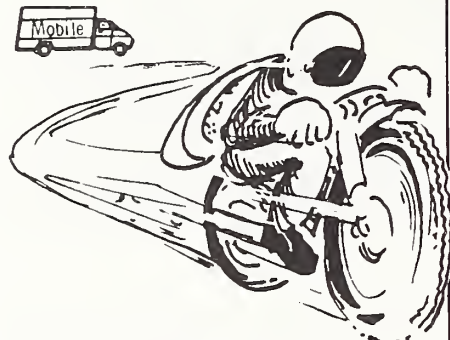
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stairs (with a detour out into the street) to visit the bathroom.

YF/VA was fortunate in that its building was ultimately bought by a Chinese Christian church, not a real estate speculator. "The church was very patient with us," Larson said; it gave YF/VA six months to find a new home. The first search culminated in a near-deal for space at a very respectable Park Avenue address. Apparently it was too respectable: at the last minute, the landlord declined to sign the lease because, Larson speculated, "He was a little uneasy with the kind of people we serve. I think he preferred men with neckties and women who wear pantyhose." After a short-lived panic, the center found and signed for the second floor of 817 Broadway.

The immediate consequence of the center's move to a tonier Greenwich Village neighborhood will be a better organized facility. "Eight thousand square feet, all on the same floor," Larson exulted, "carpeting, air conditioning, and real bathrooms." The floor is already divid-

ed into 20 office spaces and will require little alteration. The space will also allow YF/VA to consolidate its film editing facilities, located at D.A. Pennebaker's studio for the last several years. However, film clients will no longer have the 24-hour access to the editing room that they previously enjoyed.

The major casualty of the move will be the television studio. Although this will certainly be a blow to non-profit cable producers, who already have few affordable options for studio shoots, it will relieve YF/VA of its major financial drain. "The studio took up 1,000 square feet, and the fine edit suite, which was a fraction of its size, generated four times as much income." At \$11.50 a square foot, every inch has to pay its own way. On the plus side, the media center will have an improved film and video screening room, an additional rough edit suite, and a new video synthesis studio, designed by Dan Sandin and based on the Experimental Television Center facility in Owego, New York.

The center's new location also presents the

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opportunity of—and the economic necessity to—seek out commercial clients for the first time. To this end, YF/VA has purchased a new videola which produces film-to-tape transfers of superior quality. The service will be rented at both non-profit and “competitive” commercial rates, Larson said. But, he declared, artists and non-profit groups will retain priority. “There are the realities of the IRS. There are restraints as to how much unrelated business income we can earn. We are only offering commercial service because the discounts to artists are so substantial.”

Larson sees the film-to-tape transfer service as “the beginning of an experiment. Ultimately, we’d like to develop a set of services for commercial clients.” The videola was chosen as the pilot because of the burgeoning music video business. Most “videos” are originally shot in 16mm, and Larson thinks it is a market the center can attract. —DG■

## FIELD REPORT

# DUTCH TREAT: AMSTERDAM'S LUMINOUS IMAGE

Shelley Rice

The past few years have seen a burgeoning of video activity in Europe. Museums are including video in their exhibition schedules, galleries are specializing in the new medium, critics are becoming involved in shaping a video discourse, and in 1984 numerous festivals—including those in Locarno, Switzerland, The Hague, Netherlands, San Sebastian, Spain, and Montbeliard, France—have provided opportunities for video buffs to meet, view tapes, and exchange ideas. Dorine Mignot, curator at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, decided that it was time to focus some of this energy into a major, multinational exhibition which would permit comparisons of works from two continents and encourage discussions about the potential of video as an art form. The result: Het Lumineuze Beeld/The Luminous Image, on view at the Stedelijk last fall.

In curating this show, Mignot's particular aim was to emphasize the versatility of video as an aesthetic medium. “I wanted to put on a show so diversified that, after seeing it, no one could say, ‘Video is this, video is that,’ or ‘I don’t like video art because it is this or that,’” she said. “There are so many different works here that there’s something for everyone, and an exhibi-



Kees de Groot's *Mauwro's Wijk*, a high point of “The Luminous Image.”

Courtesy Stedelijk Museum

tion like this can prove that video can be many things.” Mignot wrote in the catalogue introduction that she wanted to emphasize “explorations in the direction of a synthesis of a personal contact with the electronic medium,” so she focused on video installations rather than single channel tapes “because it is precisely installations that express the tendency described above, and because various characteristics of video which have remained unused in tapes have been explored and worked up in installations.” She selected 22 installations by artists from both Europe and America: Vito Acconci, Max Almy, Dara Birnbaum, Michel Cardena, Brian Eno, Marie-Jo La Fontaine, Kees de Groot, Nan Hoover, Michael Klier, Shigeko Kubota, Thierry Kuntzel, Uwe Laysiepen/Marina Abramovic, Mary Lucier, Marcel Odenbach, Tony Oursler, Nam June Paik, Al Robbins, Lydia Schouten, Elsa Stansfield/Madelon Hooykaas, Francesc Torres, Bill Viola, and Robert Wilson.

Mignot defines an installation as “any videotape . . . shown in a setting devised by the artist,” and categorizes the four types of installations represented in the Stedelijk show as: “Video installations in the narrow sense, which consist of a single videotape shown in a space entirely con-

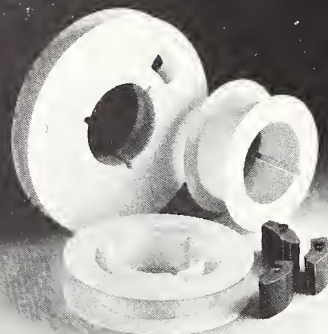
trolled by the artist” (Abramovic/Ulay, Klier); “live installations or closed circuit installations, which include at least one camera that registers the images and one monitor which plays them back simultaneously” (Hoover, Acconci, Hooykaas/Stansfield, Robbins); “multiscreen installations, which consist of several videotapes and monitors in which, alongside the spatial effect of the individual images, relations are created between the rhythm and direction of movement in those images” (Kuntzel, La Fontaine, Lucier, Cardena, Paik); and “multimedia installations” (Schouten, Almy, Viola, Wilson, Eno, Kubota, Birnbaum, de Groot, Odenbach, Torres, Oursler). These differences in form were paralleled by differences in tone, ranging from Lucier's poetic lyricism to Wilson's surrealism, Eno's meditative calm to Oursler's East Village expressionism. Content, too, varied widely, spanning social/political issues (Torres, Almy), broadcast TV (Acconci), the free flow of light and landscape (Robbins, Stansfield/Hooykaas), history (Odenbach and de Groot), sports (Cardena), female fantasy and sexuality (Schouten) and poetry, martyrdom and ecstasy (Viola).

The exhibition was immensely successful in meeting Mignot's expressed goals. It was truly a



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video extravaganza. The opportunity to see so many installations in one space was in itself exciting; and though the exhibition had its low points, the general quality of the work was high. Walking through the various exhibition rooms was like entering and leaving completely different worlds, partaking of different visions, at each step examining the manifold potentials of video as an art form. For a video installation-starved critic like myself, who lives and works in a New York art world currently steeped in painting and Reaganomics, the effect was truly dazzling.

Once the bedazzlement subsided, however, it was clear that the impact of the exhibition as a whole was stronger than most of its constituent parts. There were many solid, professional pieces, but there were also some weak works, and only a few that were really inspired. Overall, the American contribution was more even in quality than the European. While all the U.S. works were well planned and executed, the people who fared best tended to be those—like Lucier, Oursler, Kubota and Viola—who showed works that were originally exhibited elsewhere, and thus were not overly subject to the limitations of time, money and resources imposed by the Stedelijk situation. The Europeans, on the other hand, contributed some problematic pieces, like those by Cardena, Klier, and La Fontaine, but also some tremendously exciting ones. Since much of the American work is familiar to the U.S. video community, I'll pay most attention here to some of the strengths and weaknesses of the European showing.

This high point of the exhibition, in fact, was a European work: *Nostos II*, by Thierry Kuntzel of France, a nine-channel black-and-white piece displayed on nine monitors arranged in a square. Truly a nostalgia trip, which used a black-and-white paluch camera out of adjustment and mood music to heighten its romanticism, this narrative work was a stunning montage of images—figures, books, photographs, fire—which lit up and faded across the monitors, conjuring ghosts and traces of an old movie past which Kuntzel vividly rekindled. Other strong pieces included the interactive installation by Dutch artist Nan Hoover, *Walking in Any Direction*. . . , a spare room which contained two columns with embedded monitors displaying the feet of viewers as they strolled through. At the same time, a bluish light source in the room cast shadows of their entire bodies, larger than life, onto the wall. The disembodied, spiritual calm of Hoover's work was a far cry from the earthiness of Ulay/Abramovic's *Terra degli Dei Madre*, a work consisting of a single color tape which slowly panned (remarkably, without cuts) the faces, bodies and surroundings of a solemn, static group of women in black as a mournful chant filled the air. Like the tape, the installation—consisting only of a wooden chair on which the monitor rested and another chair beside it to which was attached a megaphone

with a speaker inside—was a symbolic indictment, as if the mothers of the earth were rising up in anger and sadness. In spite of the installation, however, the strength of this piece was carried by the videotape; the props could have been entirely dispensed with without significant loss of meaning.

In fact, in many cases, the European tapes seemed more self-contained than the American: the artists' major commitment was obviously to the video—sometimes to the detriment of the piece, since several of the artists did not seem particularly proficient in the expressive manipulation of space or objects in an installation setting. Kees de Groot's exploration of Dutch prehistory, for instance *Mauhro's Wijk*, contained two beautiful tapes, but the installation itself lacked the power to amplify their message. The same can be said of Marcel Odenbach's work, which displayed three channels of potentially interesting videotapes linking music, history, violence and sexuality in a setting which was, however, unresolved. The U.S. artists, on the other hand, who have a 20-year history of installation works to fall back on, were proficient at working video into a spatial format; yet sometimes—as in the cases of Almy and Eno—that very proficiency seemed to override significant content.

In cooperation with Stedelijk, the Jan Van Eyck Akademie in the Dutch town of Maastricht tried to encourage a dialogue on the present state and future possibilities of video art by sponsoring a video symposium with exhibition artists and writers as panelists. Unfortunately, the symposium fell flat—partly because the artists were simply too exhausted to handle a two-and-a-half hour journey and conference right after the opening, and partly because the event was handled in a disorganized and rather academic way. Nevertheless, the issues raised by the show, and preserved and amplified in the catalogue (which includes a book with information, both visual and verbal, about the art and artists and general essays by writers like John Hanhardt, Vito Acconci, David Ross, Jean-Paul Trefois, Nam June Paik, Wim Beeren, David Hall and Jean-Paul Fargier as well as a videotape juxtaposing documentation of the installations with interviews with the artists) will be with us for years to come. There will be many more multinational exhibitions and many more conferences necessary to fully explore these questions of form and content, for they are critical aspects of video's future as an art form. ■

*Shelley Rice is a New York-based arts critic who specializes in writing about photography and multi-media art.*

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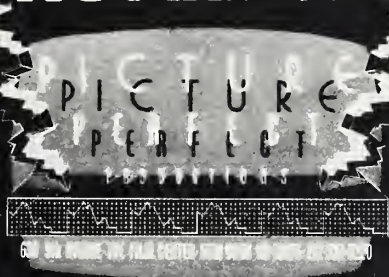
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# SUPER

Bob Brodsky and Toni Treadway

We are often on the phone with college and high school teachers who are looking for information and support for using Super-8 in their film/video classes. The trade publications totally neglect Super-8 these days and the teachers wonder if there is any life left in the "old" medium. Old! Super-8 was invented in 1965; sound didn't happen until 1973.

There's plenty of life left! Students are using Super-8 to create film, video, sculpture and installation pieces which are winning them fame (awards), fortune (equipment, trips and prize money) and best of all, experience in moving image-making.

In schools, Super-8 is utilized in teaching film content (scripting, directing, composition, shooting, continuity, cutting, sound), for gathering images for 16mm film or video projects, for exhibiting as the original film in limited or unusual situations, and rarely (if you must) for teaching production skills.

At the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Richard Lerman, head of the film department, found that, although his students were highly creative and motivated, the end-of-term student screening was filled with unfinished double-system 16mm workprints: no one had the money to strike optical prints. So Lerman decided to teach standard film production technique with 16mm equipment on very limited projects, while Super-8 is used by students who want to produce color, sound films to put up on the end-of-semester big screen. These Super-8 production methods are inexpensive enough for many students to own their own equipment. They mix sound on the stereo Goko RM8008 editor, which has great flexibility and control. The work, shown large and bright at the semester's end, looks great because it is the best quality version of the film: the original.

Lerman is thrilled with the results of these changes. The Museum School students are producing more finished films, they are comfortable with moving image expression and they seem to be less snobby about format, using whatever they can afford for their projects.

When one of these students graduates, she or he can look for work with a ¾" videotape, on which many of their works can be represented. If their works are fairly short, they stand a better chance of getting someone to watch them. The tape can include Super-8, 16mm, slide shows, ½" video or ¾" video. If it is carefully transferred and well edited, the tape should look quite acceptable as a sample reel.

When students want to use Super-8 as an origination format for other media, Lerman suggests that they travel with a Super-8 camera, make dissolves and fades in the camera, try pixilation, mattes or animation, and experiment with shooting styles, weird composition, expo-

sure and focus. Get free and comfortable. Then, come back to school with the images and either edit the original for normal projection or as part of performance or installation art, or use it to create a new work in 16mm with an optical printer or in video after transfer.

Lerman's students are doing wonderful things with cheap Super-8 cameras. Cindy Kleine's *Secrets of Cindy*, a video piece filled with Super-8-originated footage, won the American Film Institute/Sony student video competition, which included travel to Los Angeles and a video editing system as a prize. *Secrets of Cindy* combines video footage of two women reading from an adolescent diary with dreamy images of a boy and girl on a beach, dancing and whirling on the sand, shot in Super-8. On the small screen this intimate video work of erotic pubescent revelations makes a strong statement about becoming a woman.

Kleine has gone on to win a graduate award at the Museum School. She ended last semester exhibiting at the museum itself in a show with other fifth year student prizewinners. Her two-monitor video installation, *Doug n' Mike, Mike n' Doug*, explored the relationship of identical twin photographer artists and used a variety of techniques (split screen, two screens and dual audio tracks) while incorporating plenty of Super-8 footage including grainy, slow motion black-and-white footage of "the guys hanging out, just doing what brothers do together."

## MAKES THE GRADE

Cindy Kleine's *Secrets of Cindy*, a videotape filled with Super-8-originated footage: "An intimate work of erotic pubescent revelations."

Courtesy Videomaker

Considerably more ambitious than *Secrets of Cindy*, this latest piece showed how Kleine's comfort with her tools and technique left her open to aesthetic experimentation.

Another Boston hotbed of Super-8 use is the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where an appreciation of the possibilities of Super-8 antedates its 1965 appearance on the market. Richard Leacock, head of film and video at M.I.T., pioneered small, fluid camera styles with Robert Drew and D.A. Pennebaker in the late 1950s, and tried to adapt Super-8 for lightweight sound documentary work in the late '60s. His effort was consistent and revolutionary even though the Leacock-Hampton system did not take over the marketplace. In fact, after Leacock's initial flirtation with Super-8, he went into a mid-'70s pout about it, stating that "it wasn't the be all and end all" medium for documentary work that would enable every filmmaker to shoot fast and intimately at low cost.

Today, with his same shooting style and a new appreciation for Super-8, Leacock produces "little gems" around the edges of his funded 16mm work. His Super-8 *Visit to Monica* was directed in frustration at students who went for upscale solutions to simple problems. Now, his prolific students produce in 16mm, Super-8 and video. Glorianna Davenport and other lecturers





in the film/video section have gotten the word out that all media must be understood so that each person can choose a style and format that suits their project. M.I.T. students have access to 1" editing, image manipulation, computer graphics and prototype interactive systems. From the fellows at the Center for Advanced Video Studies (CAVS) to the Architecture Machine Group, students mingle their ideas and technologies. Like that most humble of media—paper and pencil—Super-8 serves in the midst of a cornucopia of hardware. M.I.T. students develop fluidity with film and video while fulfilling the demands of a high tech institution.

Bill Seaman, a grad student at the CAVS, has received recognition and respect for his videotape *She*, a haunting collection of images shot from a window on the New York-to-Boston train run. It is set to a rhythmic voice poem that is rich enough to become music. Seaman gathered his images in Super-8 and manipulated the frame rate both at the time of transfer to video and again in 1" postproduction until some images were so slow they come apart and are seen as distinct video fields. Seaman's strong aesthetic came to the attention of the CAT Fund of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, and now he has help for his new video work, *The Water Catalogue*, also composed of Super-8 images.

Another M.I.T. video artist working in Super-8 is Karine Hrechdakian, who went back to her native Lebanon during periods of severe

strife to gather images. In 1" video, after transfer and some speed changes, she created a very personal statement about the war. When she went to West Africa to crew on a 16mm shoot with Leacock, she packed her Super-8 camera and recorded some funny and poignant moments of Leacock's interactions with the native culture; the resulting *Cine-Senegal*, postproduced in 1" video, is a delightful document somewhere between anthropological filmmaking and travelogue.

While some schools offer plenty of access to hardware, the majority must contend with old equipment, budget restrictions and more students than resources. Here, the best solution is to encourage short films made by individuals or teams. These films can represent any aesthetic, but they must be made quickly and with minimum access. All high schools have built-in limitations to their media programs, but that need not necessarily cool down the excitement.

History teacher John O'Connor is filling in this year in the film class at Concord (Mass.) Academy. His own trial-by-film came last spring with *Catfish Lake*, a 45-minute film adapted from an early 20th-century short story. Students acted and crewed and filled the hall on the night of its premiere. O'Connor and the team never departed from the camera-original film which looked beautiful when projected by arc light 20 feet wide in the school auditorium. The film was a major dramatic experience for the community and launched several students in the direction of filmmaking at college. It did more to secure respect for independent filmmaking than any lecture could. Super-8 made it possible.

One thing O'Connor's film did not do is teach the standard film production skills which apply in "the industry." This is something that Super-8 has been used for in the past but does not do particularly well. Super-8 can be used as "little 16" to teach filmmaking technique by schools which have sufficient budgets, but this use of Super-8 is not as economical as Super-8-for-Super-8's sake because heavy equipment purchases are necessary. Some schools choose to set themselves up with double-system Super-8, buying six- or eight-plate editing flatbeds, sync sound recorders for mag film, sync blocks and other production and postproduction equipment which is *de rigueur* in 16mm and 35mm filmmaking. This kind of equipment is available from Super8 Sound in Cambridge, Mass., a pioneer in the design of such equipment 10 years ago. (They also carry a wide range of simple, single-system Super-8.) With this hardware, we recommend that students workprint and edgenumber their films, thus exactly recreating large format technique. (Workprints and edgenumbers are available from Newsfilm Lab in Los Angeles.)

The problem with this approach is that the economy of Super-8 is lost once you use "little 16." While students master large format film-

making technique, they depart from the quality of their Super-8 camera-original film. They get headaches, added costs and frustration from edgenumbers, workprints and double-system sync problems, but they learn the real world skills. If skill with technology is desired, better have the students make short films directly in 16mm and have a finished 16mm to show. The "little 16" method will net technical training, but the finished film will not have as high a quality as using simple methods of Super-8.

Super-8 is being used credibly and creatively at many institutions beyond the Boston area, such as Hampshire College, Rhode Island College of Design, the School of Visual Arts, the State University of New York at Purchase and Buffalo, Baylor, Antioch, Vanderbilt and CalArts. It's also prominent in anthropological work at such places as the University of Southern California's Center for Visual Anthropology. Super-8 is the mainstay of workshop programs at media arts centers around the country, from SWAMP in Houston to the Northwest Film Study Center in Portland, Oregon. Huey Coleman of the Maine Alliance of Media Arts shows strong Super-8 work each year at an all-state young filmmakers festival.

Super-8 has matured into its own medium. It does what it can do well, if the artist respects its limitations. In fact, it is so enjoyable and accessible, many young people and artists who normally wouldn't think of themselves as filmmakers use it; we've seen extraordinary images from dancers, painters, weavers, potters and musicians who find Super-8 accessible. Super-8 attracts women, children and old folks in droves. Super-8 is an entry into filmmaking for many people. Video may meet some of the needs for media training, but Super-8 still holds a special place due to its simplicity, access and cost. ■

*Bob Brodsky and Toni Treadway wrote Super 8 in the Video Age, which is available in both English and Spanish.*

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### **VIDEO FOR FILM**



# ETHNOCENTRIC CIRCLES

## A SHORT HISTORY OF ETHNOGRAPHIC FILM



Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922) "signaled a major shift in ethnographic films" but is, nevertheless, "a less than accurate portrayal of Inuit life."

*Courtesy Museum of Modern Art*

### Claudia Springer

Given the colonial origins of anthropology, the notions of Western superiority found in many anthropological studies and the related discipline of ethnography are not surprising. As anthropologist George Condominas has observed, "Colonial expansion, by putting Europeans in contact with other cultures, led to the creation of anthropology."<sup>1</sup> He goes on to explain the origins of ethnography: "...in the joining of two streams—the missionaries on one side and the explorers and administrators, both civil and military, on the other—the first golden age of ethnography was born at the turn of the century."<sup>2</sup> Ethnography is the descriptive study of social systems, while anthropology, the study

of humans, investigates a much wider range of concerns and provides theoretical frameworks for ethnographies.

Traditionally, ethnography, like anthropology in general, has concentrated on so-called primitive cultures. This tendency dates from the mid-nineteenth century—the formative years of anthropological study—when the doctrine of evolutionism was formulated in reaction to the theory of degeneration: "savages" were descendants of ancient people who had fallen from grace. Evolutionists argued that human development progresses from a state of savagery to one of culture, for them a term synonymous with civilization and Western European society. Using a model developed during the eighteenth century, they traced a continuum of human

development upward from savagery and barbarism to civilization. Studying "savage" people, it followed, would provide insight into Western European ancestry. An integral assumption of evolutionism is that all "savage" cultures are similar. Therefore, extensive fieldwork wasn't necessary (hence the label "armchair anthropologists").<sup>3</sup> As the philosopher Thomas Kuhn has shown in his analysis of the history of science,<sup>4</sup> the idea of progress is fraught with difficulties. In anthropological thinking, it is especially insidious, since it implies racial and ethnic superiority, manifested by terms such as "savage," "primitive," "race," and "tribe" (as opposed to "nation"), all indicating value judgments.<sup>5</sup>

At the the turn of the century, however, the



anthropologist Franz Boas challenged the primacy of evolutionism with his theory of historical particularism and diffusionism. Boas maintained that the immediate task of anthropologists should be to record endangered cultures that might soon vanish ("salvage ethnography"). Against the gross generalizations of evolutionists, he stressed the specifics of each culture and taught that only after extensive data had been collected through fieldwork could any theories be forwarded, and then only cautiously. Fieldwork has been a foundation of anthropology ever since, although in Boas's time it was not yet extensively linked to colonial rule. Since they were interested in extracting wealth from the land, and the native populations were treated mainly as a source of labor to be controlled, colonial governments found the natural sciences more useful than anthropology.<sup>6</sup> Thus, colonial administrators' interest in indigenous people's customs took the form of curiosity and hobby. Anthropology, however, became more closely allied to colonial rule between the two world wars when indirect rule was being formulated. At this time, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski advanced functionalism, a type of applied anthropology. Functionalism, both structural (Radcliffe-Brown) and psychological (Malinowski), reintroduced theorization to anthropology in reaction to Boas's deemphasis on theory. Some applied anthropologists formed alliances with colonial administrators, sometimes working for them directly, and in some cases continued to serve their governments' policies after World War II. For example, in 1967, a U.S. specialist in Thailand told the *New York Times*,

The old formula for successful counterinsurgency used to be ten troops for every guerrilla. Now the formula is ten anthropologists for every guerrilla.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, other anthropologists began to re-evaluate the supposed objectivity of their research. Some of the assumptions under attack were:

- anthropologists should mainly study communities untouched by modern influences;
- such communities exist;
- even when anthropologists encounter modern influences in a community, they can filter out uninfluenced aspects;
- anthropologists can leave a community unchanged by their presence when they complete their fieldwork and leave;
- anthropological research exists to further the cause of objective, scientific knowledge;
- if their research is utilized by government or business interests, anthropologists are not responsible;
- when anthropologists conduct their fieldwork in a situation where conflict exists, they can remain neutral and benefit neither side;

- sources of funding do not influence anthropologists' work;
- all cultures will eventually become Westernized and anthropologists perform a valuable function by ensuring that the transition is smooth.

In addition, they criticized anthropology for always comparing the anthropologist's country and the object of study, for attributing Third World poverty to their people's ignorance rather than to the effects of colonialism and slavery, and for neglecting the effects of internal colonialism. Central to this criticism was an attack on the racism and ethnocentrism of much anthropological thought. A new approach to anthropology has emerged from these evaluations and from the perspectives of Third World anthropologists. The new approach is a form of applied anthropology, but should be distinguished from that conducted by anthropologists who have worked for the U.S. government. For lack of a better term, I will call the new approach committed anthropology.

Committed anthropologists have derived many of their precepts from the writings of Marx, for perspectives on class struggle; Frantz Fanon for understanding the effects of colonialism on the Third World; and Paulo Freire, for developing new relationships with their subjects based on a two-way flow of information. The rights of the people being studied receive priority, including their right not to be studied, to receive continued assistance from fieldworkers, and to receive full recognition for their collaboration in the research.<sup>8</sup> In addition, some committed anthropologists have aligned themselves with national independence movements. Other innovations have been made by feminists who identify notions of male superiority in traditional anthropology. Finally, anthropologists have veered away from an emphasis on indigenous people alone and have begun to study their own cultures. While remnants of evolutionism still exist, committed anthropology provides a starting point for continued improvement in cross-cultural understanding.

□

There is no consensus on the definition of ethnographic film. Anthropologist and ethnographic filmmaker Karl G. Heider, for instance, writes that "the most important attribute of ethnographic film is the degree to which it is informed by ethnographic understanding," though he admits many films considered ethnographic do not fulfill his basic requirements of:

1. involving long-term observational study;
2. relating specific observed behavior to cultural norms;
3. portraying holism: whole bodies, whole people, whole acts;
4. being accurate and truthful.<sup>9</sup>

But anthropology professor Jay Ruby claims that most ethnographic filmmakers rely on



*Grass*, by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack: "The emphasis was on the sheer magnitude of the event, a sort of cinematic Ripley's Believe It or Not."

documentary film conventions developed by non-anthropologists—Robert Flaherty, John Grierson, and Dziga Vertov—not any truly ethnographic techniques. According to Ruby, then,

... The films most commonly regarded as ethnographic are films about exotic non-western people. These films employ the visual and auditory conventions of documentary film and tend to rely upon narration or accompanying written materials for an anthropological interpretation of the content of the film. These films are a blending of two pre-existing forms—documentary films and written anthropology—without any significant modifications to either.<sup>10</sup>

The late Sol Worth, a communications scholar, suggested that

... there can be no way of describing a class of films as 'ethnographic' by describing a film in and of itself. One can only describe this class of films by describing how they are used... it follows that any film might become an ethnographic film because of its purpose or its use.<sup>11</sup>

Ethnographic films are made by people all along the spectrum of anthropological and cinematic training. According to Heider, "During the first 40 years of ethnographic film, the major contributions were made by people who were outside (or uncomfortably on the fringe of) the film industry and others who more or less peripheral to anthropology."<sup>12</sup> This state of affairs existed primarily because academic anthropologists tended to discount film's capacity to be a valid anthropological tool, and, by the early twentieth century, fiction films dominated commercial cinema.





Courtesy Museum of Modern Art

The depiction of foreign cultures in ethnographic film has undergone historical transformations parallel to those in anthropology.<sup>13</sup> Early filmed activities can be loosely divided into two categories: those shot for study purposes and those made as entertainment for a burgeoning commercial film industry. In the former category, the earliest practitioner was Felix-Louis Regnault, who studied anthropology and continued to make short films for many years following his first film in 1895, which showed a Wolof woman making pots at the Exposition Ethnographique de l'Afrique Occidentale, a cross-cultural examination of human movement. His perspective seems to have been that of a "scientist" interested in a specific aspect of humanity who utilized film as a tool for data collection. Other early anthropological projects were Alfred Cort Haddon's films of life in the Torres Straits, begun in 1898; Baldwin Spencer and E.J. Gillen's footage shot in Australia in 1901 and 1912; Rudolf Poch's footage of New Guinea and Southwest Africa filmed from 1904-1907; and Edward Curtis's *In the Land of the Head-Hunters* (1914), about the Kwakiutl of the Pacific Northwest.

The early commercial filmmakers, such as the Lumiere *cinematographe* operators, traveled primarily to colonized countries where they occupied themselves with street scenes, picturesque spots, and special events such as appearances by royalty or heads of state. When indigenous people were filmed, they were usually told to perform a traditional dance or ritual for the camera; there was little effort to develop a deeper understanding of customs and traditions. After the Lumieres withdrew from filmmaking in late 1897, other filmmakers stepped in to carry on the same line of international work, again concentrating on heads of state and the picturesque, and later branching out into ex-

ploration films. These filmmakers reflected their own culture's attitudes: colonized people were portrayed as simple-minded and grateful for European protection.

With the introduction of short, narrative fiction films shortly after the turn of the century, travel was no longer necessary to capture interesting or "exotic" behavior; now, a studio set and props could be constructed and films could be produced as quickly as plots could be written. But as locale fakes were unmasked, viewers became disillusioned with films showing "exotic" locations.<sup>14</sup> During the period preceeding Robert Flaherty's landmark *Nanook of the North* (1922), innovations in editing, plot construction, cinematography, and other cinematic techniques were all made only in the realm of fiction film.

Flaherty's first film signaled a major shift in ethnographic films. Flaherty had no training as an anthropologist, but he approximated fieldwork more closely than any filmmaker in the past, living with and studying the Inuit of the Hudson Bay area before filming *Nanook*. In working closely with Nanook, who instructed Flaherty in the ways of his people and made suggestions for film sequences, he departed significantly from early ethnographic film techniques. Flaherty was an early practitioner of subject participation, a practice which did not receive much widespread notice until the 1960s. Flaherty also introduced many of the cinematic techniques that became conventional for ethnographic film: long shots, long takes, and smooth pans. (Later, with *Moana*, he introduced panchromatic film.) He also borrowed structural devices from narrative fiction films: suspense, dramatic rise to a climax, focus on one or a small group of local people, and historical reconstruction. Heider praises Flaherty for understanding that film is most successful in illustrating specifics rather than generalities, and therefore choosing central characters.<sup>15</sup> However, it is generally agreed that *Nanook* is a less than accurate portrayal of Inuit life. Flaherty revived outdated customs while ignoring contemporary realities; he apparently faked a seal hunt sequence; and he took dramatic license with the design of the igloo built in the film. Flaherty has been quoted in his attitude toward verity: "Sometimes you have to lie. One often has to distort a thing to catch its true spirit."<sup>16</sup>

And certainly there are problems with Flaherty's distortions in *Nanook*, as well as in *Moana* and *Man of Aran*. Although he lived with his subjects for extended periods, he imposed his own preconceived notions onto his films. His romantic versions of indigenous life bear closer resemblance to narrative fiction films than to ethnographics. Yet despite his license with filmic truth, Flaherty clearly respected his subjects and their traditions.

In contrast, Martin and Osa Johnson's travelogues, which they began in 1912 and continued

making for about 20 years, display a familiar cultural arrogance. Film historian Eric Barnouw describes their work:

Both Johnsons were constantly on camera in sequences demonstrating their courage or wit, or both. In a forest clearing we see them recruiting forty "black boys" as carriers. When one gives his name, it sounds like "coffee pot" to Mrs. Osa Johnson, so his name is written down as Coffee Pot. Johnson's narration speaks of "funny little savages," "happiest little savages on earth." His idea of humor was to give a pygmy a cigar and wait for him to get sick; to give another a balloon to blow up and watch his reaction when it bursts; to give a monkey beer and watch the results.<sup>17</sup>

Also during the 1920s, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack filmed *Grass*, in which they accompanied hundreds of Bakhtiari nomads on their difficult annual trek to summer pastures across a mountain range. The film was not a reconstruction, but neither did it delve deeply into the Bakhtiari culture. The emphasis was on the sheer magnitude of the event, a sort of cinematic *Ripley's Believe It or Not*.

Ethnographic filmmaking in the twenties was also affected by Eastman Kodak's development of the 16mm format for the school market; for the first time, films designed exclusively for the classroom became widespread in the U.S., with the organization of Eastman Teaching Films, the Society of Visual Education Films, and the Yale "Chronicle of America" series. Anthropologist Emilie de Brigard describes the various formats which the educational market engendered:

By the mid-1920s, the anthropological teaching film evolved its canonical forms: the single-concept film of ceremonial, crafts, and the like; and the filmed cultural inventory, more or less complete. Another form, the comparison film ... was less common ... After the adoption of sound in 1927, voice-over narration gradually replaced titles ... The format of the visual lecture, now in color, is with us still. However successful teaching films might be (and it should be remembered that Eastman Teaching Films was a subsidized operation, designed to bolster the parent firm's sales of film stock), they were surpassed in visibility and profitability by explorer films and by fiction films set in exotic locations, which enjoyed great popularity between the wars.<sup>18</sup>

Scripted fiction films set in exotic locations were produced by such well-known names as Willard Van Dyke (*Shadows in the South Seas*,



1928), F.W. Murnau (*Tabu*, 1921), and Cooper and Schoedsack (*Chang*, 1927, *Range*, 1931, and *King Kong*, 1933, shot in Hollywood but supposedly set in Java). Both Van Dyke and Murnau's films began as collaborations with Flaherty, who withdrew from both projects due to differences of opinion. Indeed, these present a different portrayal of indigenous people: Flaherty's depictions personify the myth of the proud and noble savage, while Van Dyke and Murnau center on what Heider calls "the noble-savage-corrupted-by-civilization."<sup>19</sup> Both depictions tell us less about indigenous people than about the peculiar attributes projected by Westerners onto "the other."

In addition to commercial films set in exotic locations, in the 1920s and 1930s, museums produced numerous ethnographic films, some in collaboration with commercial filmmakers. The other significant event during this period was Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's fieldwork in Bali, where they shot 22,000 feet of 16mm film, for the first time using film as an ethnographic tool for collecting data. Due to World War II, the films were not edited and released until 1952, and then became instrumental in encouraging anthropologists to accept film as a valid tool.

World War II called a halt to much ethnographic fieldwork and to the production of ethnographic films. There was, however, increased interest in the propaganda and teaching capabilities of film—producing films for the

Allied war effort and analyzing the enemy's films. Later, personnel and resources mobilized during World War II for propaganda and training purposes were redirected toward educational filmmaking. Educational film acquired new respect and attention; the wartime realization that films could be propagandistic led to a belief that they could be used to inculcate good citizenship in American youth. Numerous books were written about film in education and educational film companies multiplied.

Ethnographic film experienced a rebirth in the 1950s when the Marshall family, who were not trained anthropologists, spent several years with the Bushmen in Africa compiling data with notes, photos, and film footage. They received aid in editing the films from a graduate student in anthropology at Harvard, Robert Gardner. The best known film resulting from this project is *The Hunters* (1958), which is still frequently screened in classrooms. Heider's analysis of the film locates it squarely in the Flaherty tradition of "man against nature." He also points out the film's incorrect premise—that the Bushmen were starving because their environment could not sustain them<sup>20</sup> (they were not, in fact, starving). This illustrates a paradigm's influence on research: ideas currently held by the major practitioners in a discipline can dictate researchers' conclusions, even when their own first-hand experience in the field contradicts prevailing theories.

The end of an era in ethnographic film history came in the 1960s, when synchronous sound equipment was introduced. One of the last important films to be made without sync sound was *Dead Birds* (1963), a collaboration between Gardner and Heider along with a team of scientists from different disciplines. The film studies Dani warfare in Indonesia and revolves around two main characters, combining narrative attributes with the results of a scientific research project.

Of the dozens of ethnographic films made since *Dead Birds*, several stand out as innovative or important. *The Nuer* (1970), made by Gardner and Hilary Harris about a cattle-herding tribe in Ethiopia, combines commentary on Nuer lifestyle and rituals with impressionistic images of the people, their cattle, and the landscape. Editing is structured not only around the attempt to convey Nuer lifestyle but around aesthetic criteria as well. The Nuer's tallness and thinness and their land's bleakness are emphasized. Heider faults the film for lacking ethnographic integrity<sup>21</sup>, but film scholar Bill Nichols praises its "attempt to restore a sense of the poetic to the everyday world of another culture."<sup>22</sup> An earlier film that introduced impressionistic style was *Song of Ceylon* (1934), made by Basil Wright and John Grierson, which depicted the people and landscape of Ceylon in mountain sequences that seem random according to narrative or expository logic but maintain continuity according to thematic and aesthetic criteria. The foreign cultures in many impressionistic films are romanticized and mystified by an emphasis on their beauty or solitude or bleakness as seen through Western eyes, but they also illustrate the fallacy that certain conventions of cinematic realism allow better access to reality than others. Ethnographic films that use codes associated with realism are just as guilty of creating worlds as films that use more poetic conventions; film is never a transparent window on the world.<sup>23</sup>

Another outstanding ethnographic film was *N/um Tchai*, made by John Marshall in 1966 from his Bushmen footage shot in the fifties. Marshall recognized the difficulty of communicating activities more subtle than those in traditional ethnographic films. In order to explain a complicated Bushman trance ceremony, he decided to avoid verbosity on the soundtrack, choosing rather to repeat the footage itself. In the first segment, he used stills accompanied by an explanation on the soundtrack; in the second, the footage was shown with only wild sound. Additional Bushmen films using the same technique followed, and this method was employed by other ethnographic filmmakers, notably Napoleon Chagnon and Timothy Asch in their Yanomamo films.

The trend begun in the 1960s by the French filmmaker Jean Rouch, *cinéma verité*, entailed subject participation and acknowledgement of the filmmakers' presence. In his films he attacked



*Song of Ceylon* (1934), by Basil Wright and John Grierson, contained "sequences that seem random according to narrative or expository logic but maintain continuity according to thematic and aesthetic criteria."

Courtesy Museum of Modern Art



the prevailing myth that film is an objective record of reality—a myth that denied the subjectivity involved in the filmmaker's choice of subject, film stock, equipment, focal length, framing, editing, etc. Traditional opinion also held that under proper conditions, subjects forget the presence of the camera and conduct themselves normally as though the filmmakers were absent. Rouch and others realized that the subjects' awareness of the camera cannot help but alter behavior. He also called for subject participation in the filmmaking process to avoid a situation in which, as ethnographic filmmaker David MacDougall wrote, "The observer and the observed exist in separate worlds . . . produc[ing] films that are monologues."<sup>24</sup>

To counter the paternalistic attitude of most ethnographic films, Rouch called for filmmakers to show their presence onscreen, to collaborate with their subjects, to avoid large crews in favor of one or two people, to replace background music and actors speaking commentaries with synchronous sound or, if properly done, the filmmaker's voiceover, and to use hand-held cameras rather than voyeuristic tripods and zooms. Subject feedback is also, according to Rouch, a key element in constructing a good ethnographic film.

Thanks to feedback, the anthropologist is no longer an entomologist observing his subject as if it were an insect (putting it down) but rather as if it were a stimulant for mutual understanding (hence dignity). This sort of research employing total participation, idealistic though it may be, seems to me to be the only morally and scientifically possible anthropological attitude today.<sup>25</sup>

In his first demonstration of this technique, *Chronique d'Un Ete* (1961), Rouch screened footage of interviews he conducted with pedestrians in the streets of Paris for the interviewees, and then filmed their reactions to themselves. He then went one step further and filmed a critical dialogue between himself and his collaborator Edgar Morin. But although Rouch was instrumental in the development of *cinema verite*, his work has had little impact on ethnographic filmmakers, who continue to use an "invisible," omniscient style.<sup>26</sup> However, Rouch continued to make ethnographic films throughout the sixties, including *Les Pecheurs du Niger*, *Abidjan*, *Les Cocotiers*, and *Urbanisme Africaine*.

But Rouch's ideas could be applied to ethnographic work. In 1966, Sol Worth and anthropologist John Adair tested their hypothesis that filmic expression is culture-bound and thus has attributes of language. They taught a group of Navajos the basic technical elements of filmmaking, but avoided stylistic instruction. The Navajo had never made films before, and the participants had varying degrees of exposure to films. The project produced 20 films; 10 were released as the

"Navajos Film Themselves" series. Worth and Adair say the films contain certain elements that they consider specifically Navajo, including an emphasis on walking and a lack of direct eye contact.<sup>27</sup>

A similar experiment was conducted in 1973 and 1974 by anthropologists Beryl L. Bellman and Bennetta Jules-Rosette, who also assumed that films are structured according to cultural norms and understood as a result of familiarity with the film-producing culture and its cinematic language. Bellman studied a Fata Kpelle community in West Africa, and Jules-Rosette studied the Bapostolo in Zambia. They **observed,**

When our different groups of informants viewed Western films without knowing how Western plots are structured, they interpreted meaning from their own language system. As a result the content or message of the films was missed. . . . On the other hand, when informants with exposure to Western education viewed them, they were able to attend to their content. That attention, however, still differed significantly from that of members of our own society.<sup>28</sup>

Bellman and Jules-Rosette also analyzed the films and videotapes produced by the two groups and compared them with films made by U.S. students who were also on the scene. They concluded that there are significant differences between the three groups, for example in their choice of shots, their use of film language and technique, and the amount of distance maintained from the people being filmed.<sup>29</sup>

The Netsilik Inuit project undertaken by Education Services, Inc., funded by the National Science Foundation during the 1960s, provides a third example of participatory filmmaking. The project was conceived as one part of an ambitious effort to produce an anthropological curriculum, called "Man: A Course of Study," for primary school children. Films were to be shot in numerous countries, but the only completed project was Asen Balikei and Guy Marie de Roussellet's work with a group of Netsilik to reconstruct their community as it had been in 1919. A camera crew shot nine films, treating key Netsilik activities circa 1919, each dubbed with natural sounds without narration or subtitles. Explanatory material was included in comprehensive study guides designed to raise questions and direct classroom discussion. Jean Rouch faults the project for using film crews when one or two filmmakers would have been sufficient and perhaps inspired greater trust among the Netsilik.<sup>30</sup> ESI's "Man: A Course of Study" terminated when public pressure caused Congress to threaten to withdraw NSF funding; American parents complained to their Congressional representatives that they did not want their children to see Net-

In the "Navajos Film Themselves" series (1966), Sol Worth and John Adair "tested their hypothesis that filmic expression is culture-bound and thus has attributes of language."

Courtesy Museum of Modern Art







The "Navajos Film Themselves" series applied Jean Rouch's ideas to ethnographic work. Above, *Intrepid Shadows*.  
Courtesy Museum of Modern Art

silik eat raw seal meat or learn that aged Netsilik disappear into the wilderness to die.<sup>31</sup>

Censorship of another culture's lifestyle is a clear case of ethnocentrism and raises a key issue in cross-cultural representations: should the representation of a foreign culture emphasize the culture's similarity to or its difference from the filmmaker's culture? Should foreigners appear similar to or alien from the filmmakers, or can a healthy balance be struck? Two ethnographic filmmakers argue seemingly different positions. First, Jorge Preloran:

After seeing dozens of films on ethnographic subjects, one thing stands out clearly for me: the majority of [the films] create a gulf between us and the "primitive" people they usually depict. This to me is a racist approach because unless we have a chance to listen first-hand to those people, letting them explain to us WHY they act as they do, WHY they have those extraordinary rituals, those fantastic, colorful, exotic, disgusting, fascinating—you label it—ceremonies that are shown to us, we will only think of them as savages, and never as human beings who are striving for something that is fundamental to all human nature.<sup>32</sup>

#### But Jean Rouch takes another view:

... we are a people who believe that the world of tomorrow, this world we are now in the process of building, will only be viable if it recognizes the differences among various cultures and if we do not deny the existence of these cultures by trying to transform them into images of ourselves. In order to achieve this, we must know these other cultures; to acquire this knowledge, there is no better tool than ethnographic film.<sup>33</sup>

The positions expressed by Rouch and Preloran are not irreconcilable, but problems can be found in either approach. Martin and Osa Johnson's films and American wartime portrayals of the Japanese and Germans illustrate the grotesque, insidious extreme that has resulted from differentiation between cultures. And countless travelogues depicting friendly and smiling "natives" represent the opposite extreme of reducing different cultures to homogeneity. Ideological biases can distort cross-cultural representations, whatever the approach. Perhaps the solution is in giving indigenous people their own voice, allowing them to speak for themselves and portray themselves in whatever fashion they choose, whether it stresses similarities or differences from Western culture. Participatory filmmaking is a step in the right direction. And it is essential that ethnographic filmmakers cease searching for a perfect style that will give them direct, unobstructed access to reality. All cinematic images are representations of reality and as such will always be distorted. Ultimately, whether filmmakers are indigenous or stand outside a culture, their films will reflect their ideological and political stance. Ethnographic film will improve significantly when the last vestiges of colonial mentality have vanished.

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## SEMINAR NOTES

# ANIMATION: STATE OF THE ART/ STATE OF THE ARTIST



*Audition*, mixing stills with hand-drawn characters, is one of four independent films by Candy Kugel. She believes that advertisers are the biggest boosters of the slick computer look. "For a while they all wanted metamorphic animation, and then they wanted spokesmen—but instead of a human being, it had to be a talking grape. The past two-and-a-half years is the worst situation we've had in a long time, because now all the agencies want to have a 'stainless steel' look. Agencies tend to move in herds."

*Courtesy Filmmaker*



Faith Hubley's new animated film *Hello* was inspired by children's art. The work's textured colors, achieved by layering rice paper, cannot be duplicated by computers. "I don't think we should ever have to choose between hand-drawn animation and computers," she told her plugged-in colleagues. "I want you wonderful young people to also work with ideas."

*Courtesy Pyramid Films*

FIVF's season of seminars opened to a packed house in September with the screening and discussion "Animation: State of the Art/State of the Artist," co-sponsored by FIVF and the New York animators' group ASIFA-East. Dick Rauh, ASIFA-East president, moderated the panel, which included Howard Beckerman, Faith Hubley, Candy Kugel, Susan Rubin, and Susan Van Burg. The varied responses to Rauh's question, "Is the computer a tool for—or will it replace—the animator?" revealed the mixture of hostility and curiosity the computer arouses in the animation community.

One of the evening's highlights was the demonstration of the computer program "Movie Maker," presented by Susan Rubin, a former animator who now works for the software firm IPS. The real time program is "very similar to traditional cel animation," Rubin said, and the whole system can be put together for less than \$1000. While many worry about the homogenizing effect computers are having on the art, Kugel, who took part in a group which worked with "Movie Maker," noted, "Every one of our finished projects looked different. Each reflected individual styles and ideas."

Considerably more high tech were the tapes brought by Susan Van Burg from the Ohio computer animation house Cranston Curri. Van Burg, a former gymnastics instructor who cheerfully admitted she couldn't draw, also screened her tape, an experiment in creating an image softer than those usually associated with computer art. The resulting six-minute piece took a year to program and actualize, and cost \$150,000 of computer time, which prompted veteran animator Howard Beckerman to observe, "When we were just using pencils, we weren't talking about a million dollars worth of equipment—we were talking about a million dollars worth of brains."

*Audio recordings of "Animation: State of the Art/State of the Artist" are available to interested members. These audiotapes are not broadcast quality, are unedited, and may contain empty sections. To order a copy (two cassettes), send \$10 check or money order made out to the Foundation for Independent Video and Film to: FIVF Screenings and Seminars, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.*



# SUMMARY OF BOARD MEETING AND BOARD/STAFF RETREAT

The newly elected AIVF board of directors and staff met on September 28 for a combined meeting and retreat at the Wave Hill conference center in Riverdale, New York, to assess AIVF's current operations and plans for the future. Opening the session, executive director Lawrence Sapadin noted that AIVF's tenth anniversary year is pivotal to the organization's growth. He identified the development of national services as the key strategic issue and fundraising as the primary operational issue. Administrative priorities are computerization, improvement of office working conditions, and upgrading of salaries.

Program reports followed. Martha Gever, editor of *The Independent*, announced plans to expand the magazine to 40 pages, to offer more coverage of local seminars, and to expand national coverage. In addition, *The Independent* is currently seeking grants to support critical writing and for expanded bookstore distribution.

Bob Aaronson, director of the Festival Bureau, announced that the Media Program of the New York State arts council has, for the first time, provided funding for the bureau. The bureau has simultaneously begun to encourage more festivals to include original video work and will provide additional coverage of video festivals in *The Independent*. Several board members emphasized the critical role that the bureau plays in analyzing the merits and limitations of the festivals it covers.

Debra Goldman, seminar coordinator, described plans to increase local promotion, to co-sponsor events when appropriate, and to consider conducting regional seminars. The possibility of including the screening of new works by AIVF members in the Seminar and Screening program provoked discussion. Some board members believed that this could provide a valuable opportunity for critical discussion and serve as a model for similar screenings elsewhere; others viewed the idea as contrary to AIVF's national service priority. The matter was tabled.

Administrative director Mary Guzy described the overall goals for AIVF's development: strengthening the organization's administration, enhancing existing programs, and increasing the organization's visibility. She intends to increase earned income, diversify support, increase membership (in coordination with Membership Services director Andrea Estepa), and mount a successful tenth anniversary celebration next spring.

Sapadin then outlined AIVF's advocacy accomplishments, which focused on public television. As Congress deliberated over a new PTV funding bill, AIVF successfully persuaded the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to negotiate directly with independent producers and in-

itiated the formation of the National Coalition of Independent Broadcasting Producers, which will engage in ongoing talks with CPB. In other areas, AIVF has participated in coalitions opposing repeal of the Fairness Doctrine and broadcast ownership rules by the Federal Communications Commission. In addition, the Association has begun informal talks with representatives of the Screen Actor's Guild concerning a new low-budget agreement.

In the afternoon, the board considered a proposal for a formal relationship with independent radio producers. Jay Allison, an audio independent and representative to the National Public Radio reorganization talks last year, outlined the needs of the radio community since the recent demise of Audio Independents. He urged the board to incorporate radio producers within AIVF. While the board recognized the common interests film and videomakers share with independent audio producers, various members expressed concerns about the administrative strain and possible confusion of AIVF's mandate that could result from such an expansion. Nevertheless, after lengthy debate, the board endorsed the concept of a formal relationship with the radio community, provided it can be done without undue strain on AIVF's fiscal and managerial resources, and a task force was formed to investigate the feasibility and work out the details of such a relationship.

The board also re-established its Advocacy and Development Committees, and created a new National Services Committee and a Home Video Task Force to investigate the potential of the home video market for independent producers and the appropriate role for AIVF in facilitating entry into that market. St. Clair Bourne will serve as board liaison with staff on other program-related matters.

Officers were elected: chair, Lillian Jimenez; president, Robert Richter; vice-president, William Greaves; treasurer, Richard Schmiechen; secretary, Barton Weiss.

The next AIVF board meeting will be held on Jan. 10 and 11, 1985, in New York City.

Full minutes of this meeting are available at the AIVF office. ■

## PRINCIPLES & RESOLUTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION

### AIVF FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Association is a trade association of and for independent video and filmmakers.
2. The Association encourages excellence, commitment and independence; it stands for the principle that video and filmmaking is more than just a job—it goes beyond economics to involve the expression of broad human values.
3. The Association works, though the combined efforts of its membership, to provide practical, informational and moral support for independent video and filmmakers and is dedicated to ensuring the survival of, and providing for, the continuing growth of independent video and filmmaking.
4. The Association does not limit its support to one genre, ideology or aesthetic, but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.
5. The Association champions independent video and film as valuable and vital expressions of our culture and is determined, by mutual action, to open pathways toward exhibition of this work to the community at large.

### AIVF RESOLUTIONS

1. To affirm the creative use of media in fostering cooperation, community and justice in human relationships without respect to age, sex, race, class or religion.
2. To recognize and reaffirm the freedom of expression of the independent film and videomaker, as spelled out in the AIVF principles.
3. To promote constructive dialogue and heightened awareness among the membership of the social, artistic and personal choices involved in the pursuit of both independent and sponsored work, via such mechanisms as screenings and forums.
4. To continue to work to strengthen AIVF's services to independents, in order to help reduce the membership's dependence on the kinds of sponsorship which encourage the compromise of personal values.



## FESTIVALS

# OBERHAUSEN: LONG ON SHORTS

Twenty-four hours of short films competed for a \$5,000 grand prize and six smaller prizes totaling an additional \$5,000 in the 30th annual West German short film showcase at Oberhausen. In 1984, 75 films from 35 countries were selected by a committee of five film critics and festival director Wolfgang Ruf, from 1,300 films submitted from 55 countries. Ruf says, "We are not interested in bad films from as many countries as possible. There are other festivals which try to have as many delegates as the United Nations." The theme of the festival is "Weg zum Nachbarn" (Way to Our Neighbor), and thus the festival makes an effort to allow, as distributor Leo Dratfield said, "Eastern [European] countries to show what they've got."

A representative from Oberhausen does visit the U.S., working in conjunction with the New York Independent Film and Video Expo [see accompanying article] to select shorts from this country. Ruf also came to the U.S. and Canada last September and October when he presented a package of selected works from last year's festival and lectured on the state of the short film, among other subjects. Although he met some filmmakers while he was here, he insisted that he has made no final selections of U.S. work, the space for which he described as being anywhere from "20 minutes to three hours." Ruf devotes the time closer to the festival to the "delicate political work of selecting films from other countries, such as Poland."

Ruf says that he "programs for connections—films on similar subjects under different conditions"—for example, the role of women in short films. Within the program, the selection committee looks for films which deal with a "complex problem in a simple manner, but draw attention to it; something new in experimental or animation; and fiction and social documentary by established filmmakers as well as young filmmakers and students." Ideologically, Ruf said, "We are Left, but not so much as Leipzig" [see listing in the September 1984 *Independent*]. He added, "Sometimes we will take politically radical films that are not so well done but which contain important information."

Oberhausen is attempting to be both aesthetically innovative and create a market atmosphere. "We don't like old-fashioned educational films," Ruf said. "Distributors feel that a film needs to teach something. But it's a negative influence on a filmmaker's work to accept rules. One of the problems for the short film today is distribution. A lot of films have been bought

from the festival for distribution to schools and other groups. But usually films at the festival are not commercially distributed. Art cinemas should consider short films as an autonomous art." Dratfield said that "not too much" business is done at Oberhausen, although German buyers do attend. Commercial distributors come "to find cartoons," says Ruf. Americans at Oberhausen have included Daniel Attias with *Leon's Case*, which was originally seen at the N.Y. Independent Filmmakers Expo. Attias says that Oberhausen "didn't lead to any sales" that he can remember. Other participants have been Molly Burgess with *Miraj*, Suzan Pitt (*Asparagus*), Charles Burnett and Robert Breer.

Besides the prize money, the rewards of entering Oberhausen include the prestige of participating in the premier showcase for short films (apart from Cannes and Berlin) and coverage in *Variety*. Nearly 1,500 filmmakers and critics are invited and a press conference is held daily. Video participation currently includes an invitation to a "video group," as Ruf puts it. In 1985, a writer on the selection committee is choosing the video works. The international jury has not yet been selected, but has included directors

such as Istvan Szabo and Krzysztof Zanussi in the past.

—Robert Aaronson

*Oberhausen accepts films up to 35 min., although exceptions for works up to 60 min. will be made in the case of documentaries where there are no good shorts available, not usually the case in the U.S. Films must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1983 and cannot have won official prizes at IFFPA-recognized festivals such as Cracow, Bilbao, and Tampere or have been shown on German TV. In addition to a dialogue list, Ruf recommends sending stills, noting that the press will not write up a work unless they have photos for it. Films and video transfers can be sent directly to Germany for preselection and must arrive by March 15. Send to: Grillostrasse 34, 4200 Oberhausen 1, W. Germany; telex 856414; tel. (0208) 825 2652. The dates of the festival are April 22–27, 1985. For screening at NY Expo by a representative from Oberhausen, deadline is Jan. 5. Applications can be obtained at FIVE, and additional information may be obtained from Ingrid Scheib-Rothbart at Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave, NY, NY 10028; tel. (212) 744-8310.*



The six-minute *Miraj*: Through the Hudson Hotel, by sculptor Molly Burgess, was screened at Oberhausen.

Courtesy Filmmaker



# NEW YORK FILM AND VIDEO EXPO: THE ROAD TO OBERHAUSEN

In a universe of feature-smitten festivals, the annual New York Film and Video Exposition remains dedicated to the independent short. The Expo is able to provide artists with some of the same benefits offered by the respected feature showcases: a screening at a prestige site (the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York); a critique by a media writer or scholar published in the handsome journal *The Lamp*; entree to other international festivals; and a crack at picking up a distributor.

Sponsored by the Brooklyn Arts and Cultural Association and run almost single-handedly on a shoestring budget by its founder Nick Manning, the festival is held at four sites in New York State: the New School for Social Research, the Other Theater at Syracuse University, Ithaca College, and the Met. Two long-standing relationships contribute to the appeal of the festival. Ron Epple of Picture Start, a short film and video distributor located in Illinois [see *The Independent*, July/August, 1984], picks up about 30 of the approximately 50 Expo selections for distribution. A representative from the prestigious West German short film showcase Oberhausen Kurzfilmstage [see accompanying article] selects films from the Expo as well. David Rogow, for example, got a pick-up deal from Picture Start for his film *Ipana Toothpaste Hour*, was invited to Oberhausen, and was seen there by Bilbao festival representatives. Rogow said that without the Expo connection, American independents could never match up against the slick 35mm European shorts that screen at Oberhausen. "It's like putting *Subway Riders* up against *Reds*."

Epple and the Oberhausen rep are among the committee of approximately 10 jurors that make the selections and award the \$2,500 in prizes. Last year's committee included scholars, critics, independent producers, and Manning. About half of the jurors are chosen by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS).

The Expo does share some of the flaws common to other festivals, big and small. I counted only one woman on last year's jury, and no minorities. To my query Manning responded, "It's never occurred to me that we should represent minorities. It may be a good idea. If I said we need Black or Hispanic judges, they [NATAS] could find them, but I hope they make sure they know what they're doing." (Upon his request, I agreed to forward recommendations of qualified minority judges to him.)

Several artists complained of a general lack of meticulousness on the part of the Expo—a problem that is endemic to underfunded, understaffed

festivals. "It's sort of amorphously run," commented Peter Rose, whose *Pressures of the Text* was one of three tapes selected for last year's Expo. Joan Rosenfelt, a narrative filmmaker, wasn't aware of the New School screening of her film *Blackout on Honeysuckle Lane* last year. Rogow did know about his screening, but had to send out his own publicity announcements and arrived on the evening of the event to discover that the school had bumped the screening to another auditorium at the last minute. "We're not charging admission and not paying them [the New School], so we don't have much leverage," Manning said. Certainly the fact that the festival handles dozens of films, however short, at four sites makes for difficult logistics. Like many resource-poor but well-intentioned festivals, the Expo may be sacrificing quality for quantity.

The filmmakers who attended the New School and Met screenings (none I spoke to had gone to the Ithaca and Syracuse screenings, and video was shown in New York at the nightclub Danceteria) reported exemplary projection for the works and full houses at the Met. Manning indicated that tapes will be shown at the Met next year because of the poor projection and inappropriateness of the Danceteria facility.

Usually, the festival package travels on a national tour every year. But according to Epple, who has run the tour since its inception, there will be no organized traveling show this year. Instead, the titles that are picked up by Picture Start will be made available on a "pick-your-own" basis. Epple explained that many of the programmers who wanted the package in previous years only took selections, and that "those people are the best qualified to choose, anyway." —Renee Tajima

*The Exposition welcomes non-commercial independents with films in 16mm under 60 minutes and tapes in ¾" under 30 minutes. Entry in the Expo makes your film eligible for the Oberhausen International Festival of Short Films. Oberhausen is arranging a group shipment of the American independents selected for next year's festival. Entry fee is \$10 for a film and \$14 for a video copy of a film original. Deadline: January 4, 1985. Contact: Nick Manning, BACA, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238; (718) 783-3077.*



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## QUEBEC INTERNATIONAL: MONTREAL DOES SUPER-8 RIGHT

The Quebec International Super-8 Film Festival, now entering its sixth year, is a serious and prestigious event. Along with Brussels [see *The Independent*, September 1984] and Caracas, the Montreal gathering is part of the circuit of activities which provide the most visible opportunities for Super-8 producers worldwide to meet, screen films, do business and discuss the state of the art. The festival takes place in the Cinematheque Quebecoise which is, according to Toni Treadway, former judge and U.S. representative at Montreal since its inception, "one of the best screening rooms anywhere for anything." It is located near the University of Quebec and contains a film archive and library, as well as being the kind of space conducive to workshops and meetings. "It's a much more active group than is usually seen at media centers," says Treadway. "There's lots of politics in the air."

In 1984, the crowds approximated 4,000 for 18 one-and-a-half hour programs over the course of a week. Besides special programs and retrospectives, about a fifth of the 100 films presented are from Quebec. Of the remainder, about half the program is invited from Brussels and Caracas. Worldwide Super-8 organizations are solicited to submit packages and many of the 30 invited guests from 20 countries represented brought films. Blind submissions made up an additional fifth of the program; last year 20 were se-

lected out of 70 submitted, mostly from the U.S., which lacks an organized Super-8 federation.

In terms of genres, festival director Michel Payette says, "We cover quite a range. We try to show the best of different styles and genres. We do not like the traditional amateur filmmaker, who makes a nice little documentary or travel film. Neither are we strictly experimental." Although they will show a film of "exceptional technical quality" even if it doesn't break any new ground formally, Payette says the festival is "looking for work from young independent filmmakers which is honest and shows a bit of research." As opposed to the amateurs who make Super-8 films "just as a weekend hobby," Montreal invites those "who want to live as a filmmaker—make a career as a filmmaker—say things in a new way." According to Payette, "We're trying to attract film critics and put Super-8 forward as a medium of production." To that end, the festival serves as a meeting place for the International Federation of Super-8, where topics such as distribution, aid to foreign filmmakers, and festival coordination are discussed.

This year the organizers are planning to set up space for distributors who attend—whose presence took Payette and company somewhat by surprise in '84. Montreal press, TV and radio cover the festival extensively, as does some

European press. The programmers from the Directors Fortnight at Cannes attended last year, looking mostly for dramatic features "in spite of the fact," says Treadway, "that [the festival] is Super-8." Finally, the Association pour le Jeune Cinema Quebecoise, which organizes the festival, takes selected films on the road for screening in the provinces for a couple of months after the festival so, as Payette says, "everybody talks about us for a little while." The judges last year included a representative from the Canadian Broadcasting Company, a German Super-8 distributor, and an Argentinian filmmaker. Tying for first place and splitting a \$600 prize were *Personna Non Grata* from Germany and *Blue Tropical* from Puerto Rico. A special mention went to *I Ran So Far Away* by Alessandro Machi from California.

—RA

*The festival this year is scheduled for February 19-24 (bundle up!) with submission deadline of January 10. Payette is sending applications to AIVF; or you can contact him at Quebec International Super-8 Festival, Michel Payette, Director, 1415 rue Jarry est, Montreal H2E2Z7, Quebec, Canada; tel. (514) 374-4700, ext. 403; telex 05826895.*

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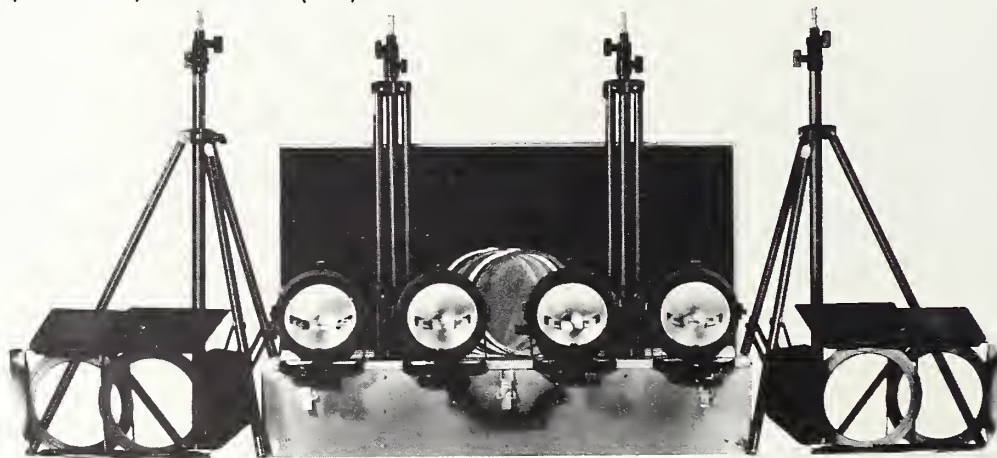
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# FILM DES FEMMES: WOMEN OF THE WORLD

Since its inception in 1979 as part of a multi-arts expo in the Parisian suburb of Sceaux, the Festival International du Film des Femmes has become so successful and popular that it is now generally considered the premier showcase for new films made by women. To accommodate the expansion it has experienced in the past six years, the festival has hired its own full-time staff and moved to bigger and better screening facilities in nearby Creteil.

According to festival organizer Jackie Buet, the new home of the festival is a three-story cultural center with one theater which seats 1,000, a second for 400, and a smaller room for 100, where the festival's first-time-ever film market will take place next year. In January, Buet will, for the first time, travel to New York to select films. The festival is planning to double the number of films screened to about 60, and a special section of films by U.S. women will constitute a large portion of the total next year. (In 1984, *Suburbia*, by Valerie Spheeris; and *Nightsongs*, by Marva Nabili, were shown, and *Born in Flames*, by Lizzie Borden, won for the most popular film in 1983.)

New York filmmaker Barbara Hammer, whose film *Double Strength* was screened in 1982, has said that Women's International is "more than a festival"; she particularly praised the lively discussions between filmmakers and

among attendees at the screenings. International press coverage, crowds in the tens of thousands, prizes and European exposure to distributors and buyers attending the market are some of the pluses of the festival. In prior years awards were limited to honorifics, but in keeping with the festival's growth, the organizers are planning to give equipment to the winner of this year's jury prize. —RA

*Buet will be screening works Jan. 4-14 at AIVF. Films in 16 or 35mm of any length, subject, style or genre completed in 1983 or '84 and not previously distributed in France are accepted. Festival will pay for filmmakers' accommodations in France and, because of the AIVF involvement this year, will pay round-trip shipping for films going out of this office. Filmmakers interested in having their films screened by Buet should send a print or ¾" cassette to AIVF by January 1, with a check made out to FIVF for the appropriate amount to cover handling and return shipping: 1 videotape cassette: \$5; 2 cassettes: \$8; 16mm film up to 30 min: \$8; 31-60 min: \$10; 61-90 min: \$15; over 90 min: \$20; 35mm fees on request. Buet has requested that a dialogue script or English transcription of the text accompany each film for her more detailed study. Films screened at the festival will be simultaneously translated unless subtitled. A*

*short synopsis, press material, stills and a bio of the maker would also be helpful. Be sure to include your phone number with your material. Send work to AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012, attn: Robert Aaronson. The festival address is Festival International du Film des Femmes, Maison des Arts, Place Salvador Allende, 9400 Creteil, France; tel. 1-899-9050.*

## IN BRIEF

*This month's festivals have been compiled by Robert Aaronson and Deborah Erickson. Listings do not constitute an endorsement, and since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.*

## DOMESTIC

● **AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL**, May 27-June 1. Sponsored by the Educational Film Library Association, this event enjoys a lofty reputation as the major

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event for non-theatrical films and videos; it has traditionally been the place to see and be seen, as attendees represent libraries, museums and schools. Though the festival is not a market and, officially, direct sales are forbidden, contacts are made and sales often follow. Entry procedures are complex, apparently geared to Dewey Decimal System-trained minds—there are 44 film and 35 video categories to choose from, and your work may be re-categorized by a pre-screening committee anyway. Winners are determined by numerical ratings. The Emily Award goes to the highest rated work of all; the John Grierson Award is a cash prize (at least \$500) for a new, outstanding social documentary (Jacki Ochs won it in 1984 for *The Secret Agent*). Echoing complaints of previous years, participating filmmakers say that last year's festival, at the Hotel Roosevelt, was rather sedate; the seminar on censorship and access was a real ho-hummer as well. [For a more detailed analysis, see Debra Goldman's article, *The Independent*, December 1983.] Entry fees are hefty, based on length: \$40 (30–60 seconds), \$60 (2–14 mins), \$80 (12–24 mins), \$110 (25–49 mins), \$115 (50–115 mins.) Even if you've entered a film, festival passes cost about \$150; one day's admission is around \$30. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Claire Monaghan, EFLA, 45 John St., NY, NY 10038; (212) 227-5599.

● **ANN ARBOR 8-MM FILM FESTIVAL**, Feb. 6–10. Event becomes larger, more international each year. New Super-8 works from Latin America, Europe, the Midwest and Australia were part of 1984's screenings, held in a University of Michigan auditorium. Event is publicized locally, well-attended by largely academic audience. Prize money generally reaches \$2,500. Top winners in 1984 included *Fetal Dreams* by Daniel Brody, Louis Cooper's animated *Table Manners*, and a Latin American entry, *Papa Gringo*. Regular and S-8 works (silent, mag stripe or cassette sound) invited to enter by Jan. 25. Entry form unnecessary if film is accompanied by complete projection and return instructions. Entry fee of \$8 for works under 15 mins., \$15 over 15 mins. Contact: Michael Frierson, PO Box 7571, Ann Arbor, MI 48107; (313) 769-7787/996-9673.

● **ASIFA-EAST ANIMATED FILM AWARDS**, Jan. 31 at the New School for Social Research. Animated works in 16mm and ¼" judged by ASIFA-member panel. Certificates awarded in 7 categories: direction (won in 1984 by John Canemaker for *Bottom's Dream*), animation, design, concept, soundtrack, student, and best overall (taken by Jimmy Picker's *Sundae in New York*). Package of winners tours ASIFA groups in U.S. and Canada. Entry fees: \$5 for students; \$10 for non-sponsored works of any length; \$30–40 for sponsored works. Jan. 4 deadline. Contact: Richard Rauh, c/o Optical House, 25 W. 45 St., NY, NY 10036; (212) 869-5840.

● **7TH BIG MUDDY FILM (AND VIDEO) FESTIVAL**, Feb. 5–10. Sponsored by the Department of Cinema and Photography at Southern Illinois University, this festival screened 90 16mm films and 30 ¾" videotapes in a 310-seat auditorium in 1984. This year, according to festival director John Michaels, a selection committee of faculty members will narrow the field to about 40. Each of next year's three judges—Julia Reichert (*Seeing Red*), Santiago Alvarez, the Cuban director from Havana, and a representative from the National Film Board of Canada—will host one evening's screening. In addition, there will be a separate animation night and a best-of-festival screening. A 2-hour broadcast of festival works is scheduled for local PBS when the festival is over. Last year's winner for video was *Godzilla Meets Mona Lisa* by Ralph Arlyck; the film award went to Les Blank for *Sprout Wings and Fly*. HBO has told Michaels it will send a representative. In 1984, the works, most of which were experimental or animation, averaged about 20 minutes; there were "no really successful narratives," says

Michaels, but all genres are accepted. Total prize money was \$1,500 in 1984. Entry fees have increased to \$15 for under 20 min, \$20 to 50 min, and \$25 over 50 min. Applications should be available at AIVF by the time you read this; the submission deadline is not yet final, but it was Jan. 20 last year. Work must have been completed after Dec. '82. Filmmaker pays shipping fees both ways. Send work to Big Muddy Film Festival, Dept. of Cinema and Photography, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901; (618) 453-2365.

● **BLACK FILMMAKERS HALL OF FAME FILM COMPETITION**, Feb. 24, "highlights contributions black filmmakers have made to cinema over the years," says director Mary Smith. Oscar Micheaux Awards are presented in 5 categories: drama, documentary, education, biography and best film. The latter two were won in 1984 by William Greaves, vice president of AIVF's board of directors, for his film *Booker T. Washington: The Life and the Legacy*. Entries ("usually only 20–30, because we can't afford to advertise") are pre-screened by the competition's all-volunteer staff; judges "from the media" make final selections. The awards ceremony is a well-publicized, gala affair held at Oakland's 3,000-seat Paramount Theater. No entry fee. Director or producer must be black. Deadline extended to Jan. 11. Contact: Mary Smith, Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, PO Box 28055, Oakland, CA 96404; (415) 465-0804.

● **CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, April 12–28. Ninth non-competitive event cannot boast of buyers or outside press, but programs drew 65% attendance in 1984 by Cleveland audiences hungry for alternative cinema. U.S. selections included *For All People For All Time* by Mark and Don Jury, *Koyaanisqatsi* by Godfrey Reggio, and *Chicken Ranch* by Nick Broomfield and Sandi Sissel. Director Jonathan Forman is looking for all genres, to be judged by a panel of area film critics and professors. No entry fee; filmmaker pays all postage. Dec. 15 deadline extended to Dec. 31. For AIVF members. Contact: Donna Dichtl, 2728 Euclid Ave., 5th floor, Cleveland, OH 44115; (216) 241-7686.

● **ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN RESEARCH ASSOCIATION FILM-VIDEO-SLIDE FESTIVAL**, June 10–13. First-time festival is part of EDRA's 16th annual international conference held at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Organizers seek "any film, video or slide presentation concerning human transactions with, responses to, and conceptions of built and natural settings. Research films, reportage, cinema verite, interviews, documentaries, fiction, animation and other forms." In lieu of rental fees, accepted works will receive certificates and 3 top works will be announced as winners to the press. Submit 5 copies of a 1-page description "including title, name(s), affiliations, purpose, relevance, and form of the piece," and production stills if possible, along with the work in 8, 16mm, ¾", ½", or 35mm slides to Madeline Goss, EDRA, 16/1985, Conference Administrator, Graduate Center/CUNY, 33 West 42nd St., NY, NY 10038-8199, or call her or Elizabeth Bailly at (212) 790-4553, or Bailly at (212) 505-8199, or Judy Graff-Klein at (212) 496-6014. Deadline: Feb. 15.

● **HOLLYWOOD EROTIC FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**, March 22–23. This exciting event celebrates sexual arousal and desire, inviting traditional narratives, experimental works, adult animation, "hard" and "soft" core, erotic rock videos and gay pornography. Celebrity judges (Penelope Spheeris, Gene Youngblood, Suze Randall, Arthur Knight, Scott Barlett in 1984) "ask first, is it horny, and second, is it art?" The first festival last year screened 15 programs in 4 days. Over \$4,000 in cash prizes was shared by 14 winners; grand prize went to

Ron Hugo's short film *Thin Walls*, the humorous story of how an enterprising young man charms his attractive next-door neighbor. A touring package of winning shorts is scheduled for theatrical release by the end of 1984. Filmmakers will receive percentage of rental. Humorous entries are welcome, more women's works are hotly desired. 16 and 35mm and most video formats accepted. Entry fee: \$15; submissions by Feb. 15. Contact: Tom Huckabee, Expanded Entertainment, 11514 Ventura Blvd., Suite A, Studio City, CA 91604; (213) 506-0607.

● **ITVA VIDEOTAPE FESTIVAL**, June 1. Gold and Silver Reels are awarded (28 in 1984) during a ceremony at the end of the annual International Television Association conference in New Orleans, but there is no public screening of the winning works. Categories for non-broadcast productions include training, information, public service/public relations, sales/marketing, organizational news, and interactive video. Most entries are commissioned or are in-house government, educational, medical, and corporate productions, although there are some non-client works entered. Last year 750 entries worldwide were whittled down to about 150 by panels around the country before a final committee chose the winners. Entry fees are \$50 for ITVA members (plus about \$75 to join), \$95 for non-members, and \$25 for students. Last year's judges were from the Red Cross and the Wassau Insurance Company A-V departments, plus some independent writers and producers who are part of the ITVA. If your work doesn't fit any categories (i.e. if it's intended for broadcast or is experimental), they'll refund your money (but then why would you be sending it to them anyway?). Deadline: Dec. 14. Entry forms and regulations may be obtained from ITVA International Office, 6311 N. O'Connor Rd., Suite 110, Irving TX 75039; tel, (214) 869-1112.

● **MONITOR AWARDS**, June. Acknowledges "creative excellence" in commercial production, broadcast, programming, cable programming (HBO-style, not access), music video for TV, special effects, computer animation and test commercials. Though most awards go to commercial network folks, Jon Alpert of Downtown Community TV won Best Camera and Director, 1984, in the broadcast news/documentaries category for *Nicaragua 1983*. Awards presented before "industry luminaries" in a gala Lincoln Center event. Entry fees are discounted for members of the sponsoring organization, the Videotape Production Association. Fees: commercials: \$75 (VPA members, and 1st entry); programming: \$125 (VPA), \$150 (non-VPA), \$100 (1st entry). Good luck trying to get in contact with: Janet Luhrs, 565 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10017; (212) 986-1414.

● **DOMESTIC FOUNDATION NATIONAL MEDIA AWARDS**, April. This first-time event will award \$5,000 first prizes for training, independent, TV fiction, and TV non-fiction categories of films or videotapes produced between January 1, 1982 and December 31, 1984 which "deal primarily with concerns that are of specific interest to aging or aged people, or those working in the field of aging." Award presentation planned for Chicago in April at foundation gathering. No public screening of works, which will be judged on technical quality, presentation, and potential utility. Pre-screening committee of "media professionals, experts in the aging field, and representatives from the foundation" will award the prizes. Return cards for entry forms as well as regulations are available at AIVF. Deadline: Feb. 1, 1985. Prints, cassettes and forms should be sent to RRF National Media Awards, PO Box 736, New York, NY 10013; tel. (212) 219-8739.

● **28TH ANNUAL SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, March 28–April 9. San Francisco features a public screening program of



selected films which in 1984 included *The Good Fight*, *Bless Their Little Hearts*, *My Brother's Wedding*, *Seventeen*, *Signal 7*, *Wildrose*, and *Nightsongs*. Film and videomakers are invited to enter the open competition for works of any length in 12 categories. \$125 prizes were awarded to the best in each category and 3 top prizes of \$1,000, \$500, and \$250 were awarded to the best overall works. Winners last year were *Lights, Camera, Africa!*, *Squatters: The Other Philadelphia Story*, and *Atomic Artist*. One day-long free screening was devoted to the winners in each category and one evening to the best in video in the competition (*Voyage of Dreams*, *Perfect Leader*, *My Father Sold Studebakers* and 3 others in '84). The prestige and visibility of being in the public screening program may outweigh the short-term gain of winning a prize in the competition, but the selection process is not an open call, so filmmakers must personally contact program director Peter Scarlet. The final section of the festival is for works made for television in film or video; Golden Gate awards are given in 7 categories in this section. Fees for the film and video competition range from \$25-85; TV competition: \$60-110. Deadline: Feb. 1. For more information and entry forms contact Stephen Horowitz, Competition, SF Int'l Film Festival, 3501 California St. #201 San Francisco, CA 94118; tel. (415) 221-9055.

● **WESTERN HERITAGE AWARDS**, April 20, honors works that "authentically preserve the spirit and history of the West." The National Cowboy hall of Fame presents Wrangler Awards for literature, music, film score, TV program, motion picture. Winners are generally studio productions, but independents are welcome, according to publicist Marcie Staggs, who cited 1981's winning feature *Heartland*, produced by Wilderness Women. Works in 16 and 35mm and ¾" must be copyrighted, have been publicly screened and produced this year. No fee, entrant pays postage. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: National Cowboy Hall of Fame, 1700 NE 63rd St., Oklahoma City, OK 73111; (405) 478-2250. ■

## FOREIGN

● **11TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF RED CROSS AND HEALTH FILMS**, June 7-15. Varna, Bulgaria. Open to works in 16 and 35mm, 1", 2" and ¾" SECAM videotape, the festival seeks productions dedicated to "human health and humanity." Narratives, documentaries, and animation in all lengths produced after Jan. 1983 are eligible. Applications, available from AIVF, must include text of dialogue or commentary, publicity material and stills. Prizes and honorable mentions in four categories. Festival pays for return shipping within 15 days after close. Separate market with regulations and entry forms screened 124 films from 18 countries in 1983. Special mention went to *We Are the Guinea Pigs* by Parallels Films. No entry fee; applications deadline February 1, films by April 1. Contact: Central Committee of the Bulgarian Red Cross, Directorate of the International Festival Red Cross and Health Films, 1, Blvd. Biruzov; Sofia 1527, Bulgaria; tel; 45 72 80 or 44 14 43; telex 23248 CH K BG.

● **ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**, Jan. 25-Feb. 3. Last year, American independent films had a strong presence at Rotterdam, accounting for approximately 20% of the 75 films screened, including *The Good Fight*, *My Brother's Wedding*, *Hotel New York*, *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barber-ship*, *Aqui Se Lo Halla*, *Burroughs*, *Leon's Case*, and a Robert Downey retrospective. In addition, there was a marketplace at which AIVF had a booth with 22

films, 17 of which were ultimately screened by 45 programmers, including those from the Locarno, Toronto, Mannheim, and New York film festivals; representatives from Dutch and Belgian TV; and distributors and exhibitors from Germany, Switzerland and Holland. Part of the decision as to whether AIVF will return to the "Cinemart" next year depends on how much interest there is among filmmakers to pay fees for shipment and handling, which ran to about \$50 per person last year. Festival director Hubert Bals may visit New York this winter to select films, and may screen works at AIVF. Exhibition at the fest is non-competitive, and Bals is a one-man selection committee. The festival pays airfare and expenses for directors, each of whom has the possibility of a press conference at the festival. Narrative features and documentaries and shorts accepted. Deadline for entry is flexible; they'll look at something as late as Jan. 15, but the sooner one submits a film, the better. No entry fee. Contact AIVF or: Rotterdam Film Festival, Eendracheweg 21, 3012LB Rotterdam, The Netherlands; tel. 31 10 13 33 99; telex 21378.

● **TAMPERE FILM FESTIVAL**, Feb. 27-March 3. Out of 64 films in competition last year, 3 were from the U.S. Loretta Smith's *Where Did You Get That Woman?* won for best documentary. AIVF's Short Film Showcase administrator Sol Horwitz, who made it to Finland in 1984, called Tampere "a hip town," and termed the festival organizers "very receptive." Tampere is a university town with a film auditorium that holds about 100 people and stays full for the run of the festival. Horwitz said that there were quite a few European TV people in attendance. Animator Peter Wallach says he didn't get a lot of feedback from the screening of his film *Raygun's Nightmare*, which was invited by the festival, but added that the festival was very considerate—returning his film (postage paid) within a short period, along with a catalogue. Daily festival bulletins and press coverage make it sound like a well-run festival, and sauna parties and a reception given by the mayor might make it worthwhile to visit if you're in the area. Deadline: Jan. 18; 16 and 35mm accepted. Max. length: 35

min., except for documentaries (60 mins.). Send films or cassettes (but, if the latter, leave enough time to ship the film later). Address for applications (available at AIVF) is Tampere Film Festival, PO Box 305 SF 33101 Tampere 10, Finland; tel. 358 31 35681; telex 22448 tam sf. Films should be sent to Tampere Film Festival, c/o Tampereen Huolinta ja Kuljetus Oy Sammonkatu 64 ST 33540, Tampere 54, Finland. Air freight Tampere Pirkkala Airport. Forwarding agent telex 22173 thk sf.

● **TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL/YOUNG CINEMA '85**, May 31-June 9. If you were born in or after 1945, have had fewer than 5 commercially released films, have a 16 or 35mm feature film with running time of 60 min. produced in or after 1980 which has not been commercially released in Japan and has not been awarded a major prize in an IFFPA approved festival, and can come up with 20-page "scheme of next film" (including a synopsis and budget), then you may qualify for Tokyo's "most promising filmmaker" award of up to 1½ million dollars for production of your next film. The main section of TIFF is a non-competitive world-class event; the entire festival is budgeted at over \$4-million of government and private money. AIVF's Festival Bureau is presently negotiating a liaison service with Tokyo. Videocassettes are preferred for selection purposes in Japan. Entry deadline: Dec. 31. Entry forms and shipping invoices available at AIVF. Address entries and inquiries to: Young Cinema '85, 402 Fuji Bldg., 4-3-9 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107, Japan; tel. 03-589-14002; telex 2225351 ATG J, or Ms. Michiko Yoshitake, Young Cinema Correspondent, 8 Passage Vallet, 75301 Paris, France; tel. 1 583-6860. Address films and videocassettes: TIFF/Young Cinema '85 c/o Nippon Cine-Arts, Co., Ltd. 9, Ichigaya-honmura-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162, Japan; tel. 03-268-5204; tlx. J32934 NCA CARGO. ■

NB: The dates of the United States Film Festival sponsored by the Sundance Institute in Salt Lake City, Utah [see the Sept. Festival Column] are January 18-27, 1985.



*Voyage of Dreams*, the first documentary to make extensive use of computer graphics (by the Haitian painter Nemo), played at San Francisco.

Courtesy Collis Davis and Raymond Cejuste



Mary Guzzy

*Allan Boesak: Choosing for Justice*, a documentary produced by the internationally acclaimed South African writer Nadine Gordimer and her son, Hugo Cassirer, premiered October 26 at the Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium in the United Nations. The half-hour film is a profile of the young minister from the "colored" branch of South Africa's segregated Dutch Reformed Church. In 1982, Boesak was elected to the presidency of the 70-million member World Alliance of Reformed Churches. His first act was to declare South Africa's apartheid system of institutionalized racism a heresy.

This project is the first documentary for both Gordimer and Cassirer, a recent graduate of Columbia University's film program. Cassirer became interested in Boesak when he read a *New York Times* article by Joseph Lelyveld, who became the interviewer for the film. Gordimer researched the film in South Africa, and she and Cassirer shared the writing, from directing and producing of project down to being "go-fer and sandwich person" together and carrying their own equipment.

The result is a straightforward documentary tracing the history of apartheid from its beginnings in the 17th century doctrine of the Dutch Reformed Church to the present day, when religious leaders such as Boesak and recent Nobel Peace Prize recipient Bishop Desmond Tutu are taking the battle against racism straight into the sanctuary of its origin. Boesak emerges as a dynamic leader and intellectual, as well as a speaker of great impact; both publicly and privately. He is filmed at the public launching of the United Democratic Front, a non-racial coalition of South African groups opposed to South Africa's new constitution.

The film also includes an interview with a white South African minister, Beyers Naude, banned from speaking publicly by the South African government for seven years. The ban against Naude was lifted in mid-October, leading Gordimer to speculate that it may now be possible for *Allan Boesak* to be screened at universities and film festivals in South Africa.

For both producers, making *Allan Boesak* was a learning experience and a labor of love. Says Gordimer, "It is this kind of film that helps to attract the attention of the outside world to people who need moral support, who need to be known about outside if

they're going to carry on fighting against apartheid." Cassirer adds, "For me it's kind of a personal statement. Coming here to the university, there were always anti-apartheid groups on the steps of Columbia. I thought I should use my skills and background to do something effective, and I hope this is a start."

Although there was interest from American public and network television as well as the British BBC, no advance funding could be raised in those quarters because neither producer had a documentary "track record." Now, however, California Newsreel has obtained distribution rights, and Australian and West German television stations are planning to broadcast the film.

Loni Ding's *Nisei Soldier: Standard Bearer for an Exiled People*, a half-hour documentary on Japanese-American men who volunteered for combat in WWII, was aired on national public television in October. The film, for which research was begun in 1982, uses archival footage from the National Archives and present-day interviews with survivors of the 442nd Japanese-American Regimental Combat Team to recreate their story and place it in a contemporary context.

While the families of these men were imprisoned in internment camps in their own



*Allan Boesak: Choosing for Justice*, by Hugo Cassirer and Nadine Gordimer, took its bow at the United Nations.

Courtesy Felix Films

country, the United States, the volunteers of the 442nd served in segregated units of the armed forces. They became among the most decorated soldiers of WWII, garnering over 20,000 medals and citations.

Ding, a three-time Emmy award-winner from San Francisco, produced, directed and edited *Nisei Soldier* under the auspices of WNET-13's late Television Laboratory in New York. Present-day footage was shot on location in Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco and Honolulu by cinematographer Michael Chin, acclaimed for his camerawork in Wayne Wang's *Chan Is Missing*. Spencer Nakasako of San Francisco's Bay Area Video Coalition is responsible for the enhancement of the archival footage for the project. Major funding for the film was provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Additional support came from the California Commission for the Humanities and the California Public Broadcasting Commission, the Washington State Humanities Commission (a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities), the NEH, and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship awarded to Ding in 1982.

Robert Spencer's DuPont Award-winning documentary *Six O'Clock and All's Well* was aired in November on New York's WNYC TV Ch-31. Probing behind the scenes at WABC-TV's "Eyewitness News" operation in New York City, the one-hour film raises questions "about the social, political and human impact of the news." Highlighting the coverage of two typical stories, one "human interest" and the other a sensational murder, *Six O'Clock and All's Well* focuses on the "superficiality of the medium, distorted priorities of the newsgatherers and manipulation of story content in the service of audience fascination." The *Chicago Tribune* called the film "funny, almost satirical."

Veteran documentarian and musicologist John Cohen hasn't named his production company Hazardous Films for nothing. His latest film, *Mountain Music of Peru*, traces the centuries-old musical tradition of the Andean people—now officially known as Mestizos—from its roots in the ancient culture of the Incans to the modern Peruvian cities, where it manages to retain its pre-Columbian identity in spite of the forces of Westernization.

In such cold and lofty locations as Lake Titicaca in the Andes, in the settlements of the Qeros Indians and the ghettos of Lima,



this 58-minute 16mm color odyssey follows the popular music known as Huaynos (pronounced like "winos"), from street musicians to Mestizo ritual dances to a miner's demonstration, where it is used for political protest. Though the settings, costumes and means of communication change dramatically, the "musical thread" that runs through Peru is surprisingly recognizable. Cohen has been collecting Peruvian folk music for 25 years.

*Mountain Music of Peru* was filmed in forbidding terrain, but this was not the only difficulty Cohen faced. Although it is his eleventh film, he was unable to attract any financial support aside from a Guggenheim Fellowship. *Mountain Music of Peru* premiered at the Margaret Mead Film Festival in September. It has also been invited to the Nyon festival in France.

## VIDEO GOES UNDERGROUND

It can be safely said that you haven't experienced New York City unless you've experienced the New York subways. Video producer Sergei Franklin has now made that experience available to everyone who prefers the bus in a haunting and unusual visual essay called *New York Subway*. Venturing underground with an Ikegami HL-79DAL video camera and rotating crew, Franklin has boldly captured the vivid sounds and images that occur 24 hours a day on every line in the subway. Franklin was in the subway system for three days at 15-hour stretches to get his footage for the 28-minute piece.

The noise, the crowds, the crime, the graffiti, the grizzled characters who seem to inhabit the subway stations like citizens of a nether consciousness are all in *New York Subway*. Many different kinds of people who rely on the subway as their major means of transportation in New York, and sometimes for their basic survival, are present, riding, talking, cutting-up, and of course hurrying to wait for the next train. A sequence in which a destitute man carefully and deliberately eats the food someone else has thrown in the trash is particularly affecting.

When asked if he and his crew had any trouble taping in the subway, Franklin replied, "No, people thought we were a news crew." Franklin, who has worked as a cab driver in New York, financed the \$7,000 tape himself and is currently developing a feature-length documentary project. *New York Subway* has been aired on U.S., Dutch and Norwegian television, and was presented at the 10th Annual Global Village Documen-



Sergei Franklin went underground to tape *New York Subway*.

Courtesy Filmmaker

*It's Funky, Punky and Chic.*

Photo: John Barrett

tary Festival and the Turin Festival this year.

Exploring another kind of underground, Joan Giummo's 20-minute color video documentary, *Dropouts*, is an exploration of a sector of American youth that has "fallen through the safety nets." Following the lives of five high school dropouts, Giummo investigates what the future holds for dropouts in different racial groups and economic classes. Does a young South Bronx welfare mother who has dropped out envision the same future as a dropout child of professional, middle-class parents? Each of the tape's subjects recounts "their route to dropping out and their expectations for the future." *Dropouts* is available in ¾" or Betamax format. It was aired on WNYC Ch-31 in October and November.

There's a lot of leather in R. Eugene Watlington's video series *Funky, Punky and Chic*. Designed to become a period piece on the stylistic trends of the eighties, *Funky, Punky and Chic* travels through the eclectic fashion scene in New York City—from Fifth Avenue to the Village—to capture images of the many lives lived on varying levels of style and taste in the Big Apple. The tape is in living color and is set to a musical soundtrack of disco, new wave and rhythm-and-blues. Watlington is currently in production with chapter three of his continuing fashion essays, appropriately entitled *Funky, Punky and Chic III*.

## IN PRODUCTION

Patricia Foulkrod has begun production on a



16mm documentary about children of parents in prison entitled *They're Doing My Time*. Foulkrod, who has been researching the project for two years, received a \$120,000 National Endowment for the Arts production grant in June, and has already filmed a sequence at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York State. The sequence contains an interview with Jean Harris, who is involved in the Children's Center at Bedford. *They're Doing My Time*, tentatively planned as a 30-minute film, will also include segments in San Francisco and Los Angeles prisons. Foulkrod is producing and directing the project, which is being shot by Ted Haimes and edited by Barry Brown with sound by Samantha Heilweil.

**ERRATUM:** The October 1984 column mistakenly reported that *Breaking the Silence: The Generation After the Holocaust* by Dr. Edward A. Mason, Dr. Henry Greenbaum and Eva Fogelman was screened at the 1984 American Film Festival. The film was not in the 1984 festival, but Fogelman reports that the filmmakers plan to enter it in the 1985 festival.

*In and Out of Production* covers newly completed works and works-in-progress by independent video and filmmakers. Emphasis is on works by members of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers. We want to hear from you about your projects! Contact Mary Guzy at The Independent, c/o AIVF, 625 Broadway 9th fl., NY NY 10012, (212) 473-3400.



# NOTICES

Notices are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; other included as space permits. Send Notices to: Mary Guzzy, The Independent, c/o FIVIF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012. For further information, call: (212) 473-3400. Deadline: 8th of second preceding month (e.g., January 8 for March issue). Edited by Mary Guzzy.

## Buy ● Rent ● Sell

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm 6-plate Steenbeck, Model ST 1900. 9 yrs. old, excellent condition. No accessories. \$13,000. Call: (207) 483-4091, ME.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony DXC-1820 K w/ all accessories. Still in original box. \$2200 negotiable. Call: Barry, (212) 495-3254 am, (212) 776-7715, pm. NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Used ¾" videocassettes. 18-20 min., \$3. 60 min., \$5. 2-3 passes. Bulk discount available. Call: (212) 434-5357, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Professional S-8 equipment including motorized editing deck with 4-gang synchronizer, Minette viewer, Sound Sony portable cassette recorder modified for mag recording, splicer, slate & fluid head. Best offer over \$600 for entire pkg. May consider selling separately. Contact: D. Gilbert, (212) 243-2392, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 16mm 6-plate Moviola flatbed. Flickerless prism. 4 yrs. old, great condition. Rewinds, bins, synchronizer. Price negotiable. Call: Barry Shils, (212) 349-2717, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** ¾" player/recorder, JVC 6100 with RF & tuner/timer. Call: (212) 624-3506, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 6-plate Steenbeck. New. 16 & S-16, stereo, 24 & 30 fps. \$13,500. Contact: Silke or Krikor, (212) 441-3615, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** 2 Sony 1820 K industrial videocameras. Brand new. 10-1 zoom lens genloc capability, w/ cases & warranty. \$2500 or best offer. Call: (212) 335-5278, 228-8282, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Eclair CM3 Cameflex 16/35 with Angenieux 25-250 zoom, 2 16mm mags, 2 35mm mags, Kinoptic eyepieces & accessories. \$4,500. 3 Kinoptic Spherical lenses; 18mm, 50mm, 75mm. 1 Taylor Hobson Spherical; 40mm. \$1500. Call: (914) 358-7485, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** J & K optical printer with own sequencer, S-8 & 16 modules. Used only 5 times, mint condition. \$2700. Bolex Rex 5. \$700. Pan Cinor Berthiot Vario Switar, 17-85 zoom with own viewfinder; can make non-reflex have reflex viewing. \$400. Bolex 16mm matte box. \$190. Call: (212) 677-2181 pm; leave message (212) 924-2254, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Betacam production pkg. with all accessories. \$495/day. Includes 1 production asst. Contact: Keiko Tsuno, Electric Film, (212) 925-3429, NY.

● **WE ARE LOOKING FOR** good used film & video equipment, cameras, lenses, lighting, sound grip for consignment sale. No risk evaluation. Turn your surplus into cash. Contact: Crosscountry Film/Video Exchange, (818) 841-9655, CA.

● **FOR SALE:** Beaulieu 4008ZM2, 5008S, 6008S cameras, Miller tripod, S-8 sound fullcoat sync recorder, mike, equalizer, splicer, 3-gang S-8 synchronizer, sliding mag head. Minette viewer, rewinds,

beepight, photostart, screen, cables. Many free extras. Excellent condition & prices. Call: William, (609) 426-2738, 9 am-4 pm, NJ.

● **FOR RENT IN NICARAGUA:** Sony M-3 camera, 4800 deck, monitor, tripod, mikes, lighting. Reasonable rates for equip & cameraperson; crew as needed. Contact: Gabrielle Baur, Christina Konrad, c/o Veronica Pfranger, Instituto Historico Centro Americo, Managua, Nicaragua; tel. 72572.

● **FOR RENT:** Nagra III, crystal sync, adapted for 7½" reels, case, AC adaptor. Excellent condition. Reservation & deposit required. Contact: Theresa Weedy, (212) 447-3280, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Broadcast ENG gear w/ Ikegami HL83, Sony BVU 110 w/time code, lights, mikes, Sachtler tripod. International crew for local rates. Contact: Lisa, Metro Video, (212) 267-8221, 608-6005, NY.

● **FOR SALE:** Sony 366 reel-to-reel 7" tape deck. Quartertrack stereo, 3 heads, new belts, rollers, playback head, edit feature. Nagra compatible. Best offer. Call (212) 548-2875, 6-10 pm, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** New Sony M-3 camera w/3 tubes; BVU 110 or 4800 deck; batteries, monitor, tripod, mikes & Lowell lighting. Very portable. Reasonable rates for equipment & cameraperson; crew as needed. Contact: Alan, (212) 222-3321; Caryn, (212) 222-6748, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** Ikegami HL-79A, BVU 110, lights, mikes, insurance. \$450/day. Radio mikes, car, sun-guns, crew additional as required. Contact: SoHo Video, (212) 473-6947, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** State-of-the-art 16mm film equipment at incredibly low rates. Call: (212) 222-6699, NY.

## Conferences ● Workshops

● **ARTS MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS AND INTRO TO GRANTWRITING:** 2 half-day workshops co-sponsored by Massachusetts Cultural Alliance, Barbara Schaffer Bacon & Robert Lynch, March 13 in New Bedford, MA. Contact: Craig Dreeszen, Arts Extension Service, Amherst College, (413) 545-2360, MA.

● **INTENSIVE CMX WORKSHOP:** 4 full days plus 1 hands-on session. Includes CMX manual. Call: Willie Crawford, Electric Film, (212) 925-3429, NY.

● **BASIC COLOR VIDEO PRODUCTION WORKSHOP:** Learn color cameras, ¾" & VHS editing. 4 sessions, \$60. Class limited to 10. Call: Downtown Community TV, (212) 966-4510, NY.

## Editing Facilities

● **POSTPRODUCTION:** Complete broadcast CMX editing suite for Betacam, ¾" & 1", \$175/hr. Emmy award-winning editor. Contact: John Godfrey, Electric Film, (212) 925-3429, NY.

● **FOR IMMEDIATE RENTAL:** 16mm Steenbeck editing machines. Includes 6-plate Steenbeck, bench w/ rewinds, splicer, synchronizer, 24-hr. access. \$120/wk. Interlock projection & film-to-tape transfers available very reasonable rates. Ask about our video editing facilities. Call John Gallagher/Neil Zusman, (212) 690-8173, NY.

● **NEW HORIZON STUDIOS:** Award-winning production house offers creative off-line editing in comfortable surroundings. Convenient midtown location. Includes Tapehandlers w/ new RM866U, tbc, 3M proc, waveform, Ikegami title camera, CG, 16-channel audio mixing, JVC KM 2000 SEG, Chroma Key, time code capability. \$90/hr. Call: (212) 490-9082, NY.

● **A REAL GOOD DEAL:** New JVC/convergence high-speed editing system w/ fades & time code reading, generating & window-dubs. Computer w/ authentic CMX list management program for effects transitions in CMX code, auto-renumbering & list cleaning. Sophisticated character generator w/ graphics capability. Everything \$20/hr. w/ editor. Contact: Bob Wiegand, (212) 925-6059, NY.

● **EDITING ROOM FOR RENT:** 8-plate Steenbeck. 2 rooms fully equipped w/ everything including sound transfer. 24-hr. access, convenient downtown location. \$900/mo., \$250/wk., \$60/day; negotiable. Call: Anomaly Films, (212) 925-1500, NY.

● **FOR RENT:** 6-plate Steenbeck editing room. Fully equipped including telephone. Special rates for independents. Contact: Bob Mack Prods., (212) 736-3074, NY.

● **EDITING POST** offers ¾" editing at \$50/hr. w/ editor. System includes JVC CR-8250 recorder w/ vertical interval head switching & balanced audio inputs (broadcast standards), Chyron VP-1 graphics, time base correction & full time code capability, including window dubs. Discounts for longer projects. Convenient midtown NY location; 24-hr., 7-day access. Book time M-F, 10am-6pm. Contact: Gerry Pallor, (212) 757-4220, NY.

● **UPPER WEST SIDE STEENBECK RENTAL:** 8-plate or 6-plate. Reasonable rates. Call: (212) 874-7444, NY.

● **STEENBECKS FOR RENT:** Moderately priced by the month. Delivered to your workspace. Prompt repairs included. Call: Paul, (212) 316-2913, NY.

● **MOVIOLA M-77s FOR RENT:** \$500/mo. in your workspace. 15% discount to AIVF members. Contact: Philmaster Productions, (212) 873-4470, NY.

● **SONY BVU ¾" EDITING:** \$25/hr. w/ Editor. Call: (212) 242-2320, NY.

● **VIDEO EDITING & TIME CODING:** ¾" hi-speed video editing on new JVC 8250 w/ convergence control. \$20/\$30 per hour. Low rates for time coding & time code editing. Contact: Inpoint Productions, (212) 679-3172, NY.

## Films ● Tapes Wanted

● **GRANDEASTERN ENTERPRISES CORP** seeks 90-min. copyrighted videotapes for Taiwan market. Send press packets. Company representative will visit NYC. Contact: George Chen, Pres., Grand Eastern Ent., PO Box 74, 83 Taipei, Taiwan, ROC, tel. (02) 303-4406/709-4202.

● **NEW FILMMAKERS SHOWCASE:** Experimental films shown in monthly screenings. Contact: Collective for Living Cinema, 52 White St., NY NY 10013, (212) 925-2111.

● **FILMMAKER SEEKS FOOTAGE** of or relating to Allen Ginsberg, noted American poet/activist. V-tape, 8mm, 16mm, stills, recordings needed. Contact: J. Aronson, Information SVC., Box 1042, Boulder CO 80306, (303) 444-6352.



● **JUST A MINUTE—TV WORKS:** 1-hr. compendium of 60 sec. spots produced by School of Arts, California Institute of Arts seeks works by students, teachers, artists, any-kind-of-collar workers, mothers, uncles, etc. ¾" & 1" video, S-8, 16mm film, "2 dimensional work" accepted. No entry fee. Deadline: Feb. 11, 1985. Entries juried by John Baldessari, Catherine Lord & Chip Lord. Contact: TV Works, School of Arts, CalArts, 24700 McBean Pkwy., Valencia CA 91355, (213) 380-9618.

● **AIVF COMPILATION TAPE:** Submit clips for AIVF 10th Anniversary compilation tape of a decade of independent film & video. Maximum 5 min., any genre from documentary to experimental to feature to animation. Humor welcome, outtakes OK. Submit on ¾" cassette only. Include return address & \$5 postage & handling, or self-addressed, stamped mailer. Contact: AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., NY NY 10012, (212) 473-3400.

● **CABLE MUSIC CHANNEL**, the Ted Turner version of MTV, is seeking unusual video & film shorts for interstitial programming. All material 30 sec.-3 min. will be considered. Cable Music Channel will pay no fees. Send inquiries and/or samples to: Jeff Appel, 6251 Afton Place, Hollywood, CA 90028.

## Freelancers

● **APPRENTICE/ASST. EDITOR:** Freelancing in Boston. Emerson College grad., 1984. Very organized, willing to work long hours for low pay in exchange for experience. Will relocate. Contact: D. Caruso, 19 Prescott St., Newton MA 02160, (617) 969-6804.

● **EDITING/PRODUCTION/RESEARCH ASST.:** Available to work on films & videos. Varied professional experience in all aspects of film/video production. Interest in independent film/video career. Anthropological field work. Rates negotiable. Contact: Debbie Bergman, (212) 228-3515, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER & PRODUCTION COORDINATOR:** Available w/ 16 & 35mm Arriflex cameras, lighting package, production van & crew as needed. Offering complete production svcs. to independent feature & doc producers. Contact: Mike Mayers/Steve Otto, (212) 777-2735, NY.

● **ART DIRECTION, SET DRESSING, PROPS:** I would like to help design your production. Reasonable rates. Resume & portfolio available. Contact: Eva, (212) 724-3879, NY.

● **PRODUCTION/GRIPPING:** Experience in all video, theater, docs. Want to learn more about all aspects of film production. Grad student, hard-working. Would like to relocate to So. Calif. Contact: Mike, (904) 644-3306, FL.

● **CANADIAN W/ 13 YRS. EXPERIENCE** in video production training & management for community access facilities seeks similar position anywhere worldwide. Contact: G.A. Lessard, 3479 Stanley St. #12, Montreal Quebec, Canada H3A-1S2, (514) 845-8577.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER AVAILABLE** for low-budget features. Contact: Felix Parnell, (212) 759-9216, NY.

● **FILM COMPOSER AVAILABLE:** Experienced w/ strong classical background; teaches film composing at Manhattan School of Music & School of Visual Arts. Contact: Ed Green, (212) 533-4303, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** specializing in Hispanic subjects, US or Latin America, available for documen-

tary. Fluent in Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Russian; English OK, too. CP GSMO, lights, sound, editing facilities. Based in Santa Fe. Contact: Pachó Lane, PO Box 266, Cerrillos NM 87010, (505) 471-2176.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER** w/ 15 yrs. experience in 35mm & 16mm interested in independent fiction films. Fluent in French. Contact: Babette Mangolte, (212) 925-6329, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER:** W/ complete Aaton LTR 54 & Arri hi-speed SR camera/lighting pkg. Experienced in docs, industrials, commercials & features; both 16mm & 35mm. Negotiable rates; reel upon request. Contact: Jim Hayman, (212) 206-8011, NY.

● **ASST. EDITOR/PRODUCTION ASST.:** 4½ years experience in film editing, some in production. Keen to work & learn. Free to travel. Call: Desiree Heynacker, (212) 475-6634 or lv. message, (212) 242-3900 x215, NY.

## Opportunities ● Gigs

● **INSTRUCTOR NEEDED:** For intensive CMX workshop. Must have working knowledge of CMX editing & good teaching skills. Top salary. Contact: John Godfrey, Electric Film, (212) 925-3429, NY.

● **CINEMATOGRAPHER WANTED:** Small, non-profit social issues film company w/ flatbed & Nagra seeks competent cinematographer w/ equipment interested in 1-yr. partnership in Alaska, beginning April 1985. Must be willing to generate projects as well as become involved in company's other functions. Contact: Affinity Films, PO Box 102974, Anchorage AK 99510.

● **RESIDENCY PROGRAM** at the Experimental Television Center, Owego, NY, is accepting proposals for projects using electronic image processing as a visual art form. Participating artists have complete aesthetic & technical control. Artists must have prior experience in video production or with other electronic equipment. Residency period: 3-5 days; program's coordinator provides instruction and technical assistance: the Center's staff does not serve as production crew. Applicants should send a project description and resume: first-time applicants should also send a ¾" videotape of recently completed work & a SAS mailer. Deadline: Dec. 15, 1984, for residency period Feb. 1-June 30, 1985. Contact: Experimental Television Center, 180 Front St., Owego, NY, 13827; (607) 687-1423.

## Publications

● **THE 1984-85 ROCKAMERICA GUIDE TO VIDEO MUSIC:** Only up-to-date reference source of video music. Listings include record company video contracts, directors & producers, NY, LA & national production listings, TV distribution outlets, related publications, glossary. 497 pp., \$60 plus \$5 postage & handling (NY residents add appropriate sales tax). Contact: RockAmerica, Inc., 27 E. 21 St., NY NY 10010, (212) 475-5791.

● **FREELANCERS NY PRODUCTION COMPANY GUIDE:** Selective listing of over 170 commercial & music video production houses employing freelance personnel; technicians, production managers, pa's, etc. You get company name, address, phone no., staff names & positions & list of previous clients. \$6. Contact: Goldring, 315 W. 100 St., NY NY 10025.

● **THE CORPORATE SCRIPTWRITING BOOK** by Donna Matrazzo, teaches step-by-step creative process for writing informational scripts. Includes sample forms, formats, outlines, treatments & scripts. Includes sample forms, formats, outlines, treatments & scripts. \$14.95. Contact: Communicon Publishing Co., 548 NE 43 Av., Portland OR 97213, (503) 239-5141.

● **PUBLICATIONS & VIDEOTAPES AVAILABLE** from National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, including *Community Television Review*, quarterly journal of local programming issues, \$12/yr. for individuals; *1984 NFLCP Membership Directory*, \$7.95 NFLCP members, \$9.95 non-members; much, much more. Contact: NFLCP, 906 Pennsylvania Av., SE, Washington DC 20003, (202) 544-7272.

● **A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO INTERACTIVE VIDEO DESIGN** by Nick V. Iuppa, discusses various equipment configurations for producing programs, principles of development of interactive video programs, how to prepare a design document, preparation of treatments, storyboards & scripts for interactive programming. Highlights critical activities in planning, production & postproduction requiring special emphasis in interactive video. Aimed at instructional designers, writers, producers, programmers & directors. 133 pp., \$34.95. Contact: Knowledge Industry Publications, Inc., 701 Westchester Av., White Plains NY 10604, (914) 328-9157.

● **WOULD YOU LIKE TO WRITE FOR FILM, TV OR STAGE?** You need inside information on proper formats, how to get an agent and who's buying what. Monthly *Hollywood Scriptletter* offers how-to articles, interviews w/ leading screenwriters & producers & market listings. Send \$1 for sample. Contact: Hollywood Scriptletter, 1626 N. Wilcox #385-1, Hollywood CA 90028.

## Resources ● Funds

● **AFTER HER OWN IMAGE: WOMAN'S WORK 1985:** Multi-media, national juried exhibition of women's artwork open to all women artists 18 yrs. or older to be held Feb. 22-March 29, 1985 at Fine Arts Center, Salem Academy & College in Winston-Salem NC. Will be juried by noted artist Dorothy Gillespie. Film & video artists may submit 2 b&w or color works. Maximum length: 30 min. Standard 16mm optical or silent ¾" videotape. \$15 non-refundable entry fee. Deadline for submission: Dec. 31, 1984. Entry forms & jury action card must accompany fee & submission. Cash & purchase awards from \$250-\$1000. Contact: After Her Own Image: Woman's Work 1985, PO Box 10819, Salem Sta., Winston-Salem NC 27108.

● **GRANT APPLICATIONS** for New Jersey State Council on Arts Matching Grants & Fellowships for FY 1986 available. Call: NJSCA, (609) 292-6130/0495, NJ.

● **SOUTHEAST MEDIA FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM** administered by Appalshop media cooperative in Whitesburg, KY provides media fellowships to independent film & video producers in AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN & VA. Up to \$5000 for new works or works-in-progress. Deadline for application: Feb. 1, 1985. Contact: SEMFP, c/o Appalshop, Box 743, Whitesburg KY 41858, (606) 633-0108.

● **KIND & REASONABLE MOVING COMPANY:** Production assistant w/ van: \$175/day. Weekly & hourly rates available. Household, airport, commercial. Call: (212) 929-3570, NY.



● **NEGATIVE MATCHING:** 16mm A&B rolling. Reasonable price for independent low-budget films. References available. Call: Jay Agharian, (212) 226-0449, NY.

● **SOUND TRANSFERS:** From any format to 16mm magnetic for only 5¢/ft. Downtown pick up & delivery. Call: Damien Kim, (212) 431-6841.

● **NEGATIVE MATCHING:** A&B Rolls cut, scenes pulled for opticals; negative & reversal stocks. reliable service, reasonable rates. Call: One White Glove, (212) 897-4145, NY.

● **FILM TITLE SERVICE:** Typeset & prepare artwork, \$100. Shot, develop & workprint, \$200. Contact: Charlie, (212) 598-9111/982-3014, NY.

● **MEDIA CONSULTING SERVICE:** Proposal coordination, script consultation, national marketing campaigns. Expert guidance for NEH, CPB, corporate & foundation proposals. Concept suitability, program design & proposal format for film TV & radio projects; program & script development; promotion & advertising for completed films/programs/series. Highly experienced. Demonstrated results. Contact: Barbara Sirota Productions, (212) 777-6011, NY.

● **FILM TITLE SERVICES:** Cut optical cost w/ camera-ready art for film titles. Many typefaces available. Design consultation if desired. Reasonable rates, fast service. Call: (212) 460-9921, NY.

● **ATTORNEYS:** Experienced in entertainment law, independent feature film production, feature film financing. Contact: Gary L. Bender, Al Dalimonte, PC 615 N. Capitol Av., Lansing MI 48933, (517) 371-5540.

● **INDIEFEX** offers high-quality sound FX & Foleys at low rates for independents. 10% discount for AIVF members. Contact: Randal Alan Goya, 949 Amsterdam Av, #4N, NY NY 10025, (212) 678-7989.

● **POSTPRODUCTION CONSULTING** on all aspects of 16mm or 35mm film. Experienced in solving problems dealing w/opticals, lab procedures, editing, archival footage, sound tracks, etc. Also available to cut A&B rolls & provide assistance in dealing w/ lab. Credits include postproduction supervisor of PBS series & editorial & technical consultant to film archives. Call: Steve, (212) 624-4142, NY.

● **CPB ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY EDUCATION TV SERIES:** Deadline: Dec. 7, 1984. Guidelines & copy of proposal available for reference at AIVF. Contact: Meg Villarreal, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, (202) 955-5264, DC.

● **SUNDANCE INSTITUTE PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** (see "Sundance Seed Money," Tajima, *The Independent*, September 1984): Guidelines available. Contact: Susan Lacy, Director of Production, Sundance Institute c/o WNET-Thirteen, 356 West 58 St., NY NY 10019.

## Trims ● Glitches

● **CONGRATULATIONS** to film & videomakers awarded Film Arts Foundation grants for 1984 pilot program funded by the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation: John Canalli, Jeanne C. Finley, Sal Giammona, Doug Hall, Chuck Hudina & Michael Rudnick received \$2000 each in the Personal Works category. In the Development category, \$1000 was awarded to Richard B. Cohen, Judy Irving, Christopher McLeod, Susan Munoz & Maria Taylor. Calgero Salvo was awarded a \$5000 Comple-

tion/Distribution grant for his documentary, *La Guajira*.

● **WATCH LOCUSFOCUS**, produced by Locus Communications, now in its 2nd year on Group W & Manhattan Cable's Channel D every Thursday at 9 pm. A showcase for emerging video talent & a preview of coming attractions, LocusFocus tunes audiences in to what's new in the video world. Contact: Gerry Pallor, (212) 757-4220, NY. ■

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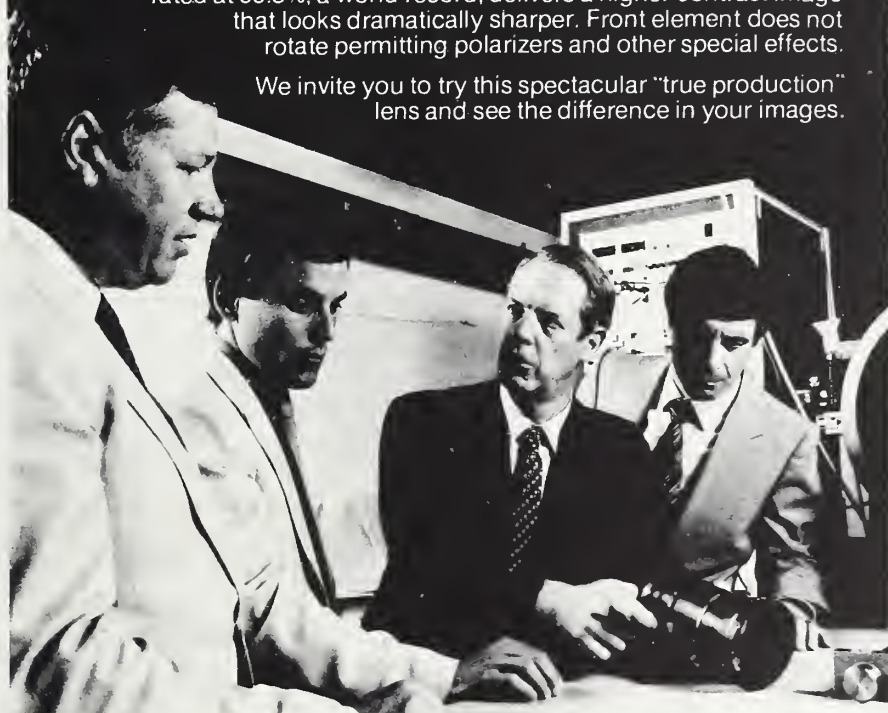
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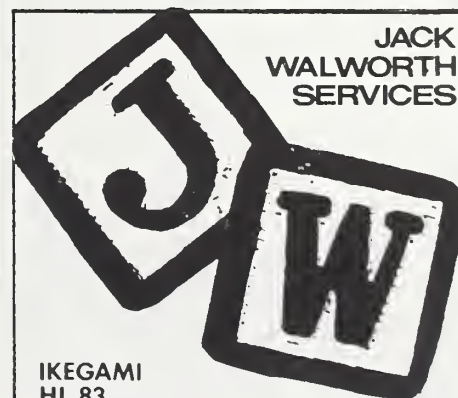
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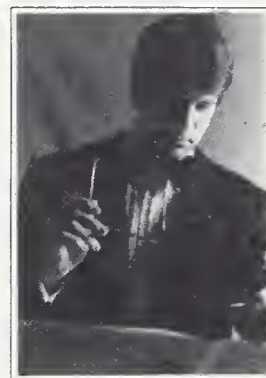
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Send your check to AIVF, *Masterguide*, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012 by Feb. 1, 1985. Recipients of the *Masterguide* will then be selected by lottery so that all members have an equal chance. (Should we run out, checks will be returned promptly.)

### FIVE THANKS . . .

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film wishes to thank Valley Filmworks, Inc., a private foundation, for a \$10,000 grant in recognition of FIVF's services to the independent film and video community.

FIVF also extends sincere thanks to Consolidated Edison of New York for increasing its support of our programs in 1984.

And we thank Marisa Gioffre, New York, NY, for her donation.

### GONG TO AFI

Stephen Gong left his position as a program specialist in the Media Arts division of the National Endowment for the Arts this fall to become the assistant director of the American Film Institute's National Center for Film and Video Preservation in Los Angeles. Gong will be working with director Robert Rosen in formulating a new advisory board for the Center, as well as organizing exhibitions of preserved material in film and video. He is already at work as project director of the AFI catalogue, a mammoth publication which is currently "doing the teens" in American film history. While at the Endowment, Gong was a key figure in the development of the independent media arts movement.

## HEALTH INSURANCE FOR AIVF MEMBERS

AIVF now offers its members an excellent Group Life & Medical Insurance Plan. Highlights include:

- \$1,000,000 Major Medical Plan, which pays 85% of all eligible expenses not covered by the Basic Plan
- \$10,000 Group Life and \$10,000 Group Accidental Death or Dismemberment Insurance
- Partial psychiatric coverage
- Reimbursement for illness, injury & hospital expenses.
- If you are a member, write: AIVF Health Plan, TEGIT, 551 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017. If you're not, call AIVF at 473-3400 and ask for free membership & health plan brochures.

## FIRST CLASS SERVICE

Add \$10 to regular annual membership fee, and you'll get *The Independent* via first class mail—in time for every deadline. Send your check or money order to FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

## PHOTO CALL

To all independent video & film folk who send materials to "In & Out of Production": If you have striking b/w production stills from your project, preferably in vertical format with good contrast, send them along with the written copy to Mary Guzy, Notices Editor. Please indicate whether or not you wish the photo returned & label the still with title, director, actors, situation, return address & phone number. Let's have full-page photo spread of recent independent work!!

## MOVING? LET US KNOW . . .

It takes four to six weeks to process an address change. So please notify us in advance.

## LAST CHANCE FOR A NEW YEAR AT THE OLD PRICE

In January 1985, AIVF will be raising our membership dues for the first time in five years. Individual memberships will be \$35, student memberships \$20, and organizational memberships \$75. It's been our policy to keep AIVF dues as low as possible, but our rising costs, including a big rent increase this year, force us to pass some of this inflation on to you.

However, we want to give our current members a chance to renew at the old rate. No matter when your membership expires, if you send \$25 before February 15, 1985 (\$15 for students, \$50 for organizations), we will extend it for one year from its expiration date. If you delay renewal until your expiration date, you'll have to pay the higher price. If you join AIVF as a new member before December 31, 1984, you can also take advantage of the lower rates.

Please extend my membership for one more year at the old rate or enter my new membership in AIVF.

name \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ individual \$25 (voting)  
\_\_\_\_\_ student \$15 (non-voting)  
\_\_\_\_\_ organization \$50 (voting)

\_\_\_\_\_ first class mailing of  
*The Independent* \$10 (optional)  
\_\_\_\_\_ mailing outside the U.S.,  
Canada, or Mexico \$10  
(mandatory)

Return to: AIVF Membership, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.



# "THE AATON LTR HAS THE BRIGHTEST VIEWFINDER OF ANY 16 OR 35MM CAMERA THAT I'VE PUT MY EYE TO." ED LACHMAN.



**A**claimed cinematographer Ed Lachman has looked through many viewfinders—for Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders and now for his latest work on the feature, "Stripper." He knows what he wants when he sights through the eyepiece.

That's why he didn't waste time over his camera choice for "Stripper." For Ed, only the Aaton LTR would do, and the high definition viewing screen was a key reason.

## **A CURVED LENS FOR A SHARPER IMAGE**

Aaton's fiber optic technology and concave viewing screen produce one of the brightest images in filmmaking. "The magnification is superb, and the markings are clear and precise," Ed notes. "You can see around the entire

frame without aberrations or visual clutter."

## **16MM FLEXIBILITY WITH 35MM QUALITY**

The viewfinder was only one of the reasons Ed picked Aaton. He knew the LTR 54 was the first camera with Super 16 built in—not added on. It weighs only 13 pounds, giving you extraordinary mobility. Plus, the image can be blown up to high grade 35mm with possible cost savings of 75% on raw stock and 50% in post-production.

## **CREATIVITY WITH CLEAR TIME**

Aaton Clear Time Recording (CTR), an SMPTE time code system, electronically synchronizes image to audio. Simply



punch production information into the LTR and audio recorder at the beginning of each day. Then concentrate on cinematography, not slating. CTR makes life easier in post-production because you can read the information right off the fullcoat.

## **STUDIO VERSATILITY**

Aaton's 20cm eyepiece extender, which locks easily onto the viewfinder, helps you make the difficult shots. In tight places, around corners. "The extender really increases production capability," Ed says, "and keeps the image sharp."

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# Newark Mediaworks

PRESENTS

## DECEMBER 7 & 8

**December 7 and 8, 1984**  
**THE MERGING OF FILM AND VIDEO-  
TAPE INTO ELECTRONIC CINEMA**  
Thomas Brown, formerly Executive in Charge of Electronic Cinema Development at Coppola's Zoetrope Studio and creator of special effects for films including **GHOSTBUSTERS**, is now an independent producer. He will talk about his experiences in early efforts to introduce electronic technologies to film production, notably at Lucasfilms Industrial Light and Magic Company and Francis Ford Coppola's Zoetrope Studio. He will talk about what's coming in these areas, both "high ticket" technologies and some which are within the reach of independent producers. A special focus of the discussion will be the role of video-disc in film production.

**December 7, 1984 FRIDAY**  
**Reception at Newark MediaWorks**  
P.O. BOX 1716, 60 UNION STREET  
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07101

**from 7:00 to 9:30 P.M.**  
A chance to meet Thomas Brown informally and to hear a preview of the issues to be discussed at the workshop. An interesting evening for both media professionals and video and film lovers.

**December 8, 1984, SATURDAY**  
**Workshop at Essex County College,**  
**Main Entrance, 303 University Avenue,**  
**Newark, NJ from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**  
This event is being co-sponsored by WNET/Thirteen's INNOVATION and The Media Production Technology Center of Essex County College.

Registration for this workshop can be guaranteed only if made in advance. Limited enrollment.  
**Admission: \$35.00/\$25.00 for members of the NJ Association of Media Artists. Reception only \$10.00. Scholarships available.**

For more information CALL Tami Gold/Christine Vogel at 201/690-5474

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